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WHEN GREEK MEETS GREEK

THE battlefields are quiet as the summer days begin, though the lull is tense with expectation of the breaking storm. In these last moments of preparation it is natural that peoples' minds should be engrossed by thoughts of the task confronting our armies. But at the same time our military preoccupation must not serve as an excuse for ignoring such a crisis as has arisen among the Greeks—a crisis for which the British Government, and especially Mr. Churchill, have their share of responsibility.

The crisis itself is nothing new; for many months past we have discussed its course. But in the last few weeks it has reached a point where British intervention has gone far beyond Mr. Leeper's backstairs intrigue in Cairo, and has developed into direct action against the supporters of the National Liberation Front. Last week some details were revealed of the "mutiny" among the Greek forces in the Middle East. Now we receive news that Greek crews at a port in this country have been prevented from manning ships allotted to Greece because many of them, including some officers, had signed a petition attacking the Cairo politicians and declaring their support for the Political Committee led by Colonel Bakirdjis. In this case, we are glad to hear, there is no suggestion of disorder or serious trouble, and we may hope that these men will be readily granted the amnesty so far denied to their comrades in Egypt. But this incident is further proof of a fact which Mr. Churchill seems unwilling to recognise. The vast majority of Greeks are republican, and have no wish to see their King return—least of all, as on a previous occasion, in a British warship. When political feeling of such strength exists in an army or a fleet it is no use hoping that it can be checked by punitive measures.

That we do not yet possess complete information about the events in Egypt is proof that no accurate or unpolemical reports are to be expected from official quarters. This belief is fully confirmed by the protest of twenty-three correspondents in Cairo to the British and American authorities. They complain that they were not allowed to send cables which conflicted with the official version of events; that they were reduced to the position of relaying official hand-outs to their papers; and that every possible obstacle was put in the way of a free expression either of facts or comments. This effort by the British censorship to stifle criticism and suppress the facts is the more scandalous in that the virtual control of Greek politics has passed to Downing Street. Only informed public opinion can restrain Mr. Churchill, or save Greece from drifting into civil war on the morrow of its liberation.

While the coalition of the Greek Opposition remains intact and King George is unable to persuade any of the more prominent emigré figures to take part in a Cabinet that does not include E.A.M. representatives, the crisis has not been resolved. No doubt Mr. Churchill hopes that the thunder of his message to Mr. Papandreou will scare the more timid elements in the Opposition into forsaking their association with the Left. A divided Opposition would soon become a defeated Opposition. And this, we suspect, is what Mr. Churchill wants. His blood is up and he knows that he holds the trumps. Will he now have the magnanimity to make King George grant an amnesty to men whose crime is their desire to liberate their country? We doubt it; but that is the first condition on which the Political Committee—now broadened to include more Liberals—should insist as a preliminary to further negotiation. Will supplies continue to be sent to E.L.A.S., whose efficiency as a guerrilla force has been impaired partly by internal dissensions but, still more, by the inadequacy of Allied supplies? Not if Mr. Churchill proposes to continue this truculent and foolish policy which is crippling and frustrating the anti-Fascist energy of one of the most politically conscious Allied peoples. We all know that he wishes to uphold the principle of legitimacy and the right of Britain to preserve a "friendly" government for the coast and islands that control the Western Mediterranean. But the present policy will leave us without friends in Greece, will discredit our declared war aims, and will sow seeds of suspicion in every country in which our "liberating" armies hope to find, among the "resistance" elements, essential helpers.

Portugal Next

The agreement with Franco on the question of German agents in Spain and Tangier, on wolfram, and the return of Italian ships proves to be exactly in accordance with the detailed forecast in this journal of April 15th. It may be doubted whether promises to turn out German agents can be completely fulfilled in a country so deeply penetrated by the Nazis and ruled by so sincere a Fascist and friend of Hitler as Franco. The U.S. State Department has agreed to abandon its demand for a complete ban on wolfram to Germany, and is content, like the Foreign Office, to have the supply in future reduced to a mere token payment. This trickle should not be of importance, but we should like to know more about the conditions of supervision. Moreover, Franco can argue in Berlin that most of Germany's 1944 requirements from Spain were despatched in January. The question now arises whether wolfram is to continue to go to Germany from our oldest ally, Portugal. A recent question in the House elicited the information that more wolfram goes to Germany from Portugal than from Spain. The neutral ally—one of the odd new categories of the war—should be at least as amenable to pressure as a non-belligerent enemy.

The Kershner Scheme

The reply of the Minister of Economic Warfare to the deputation which pressed on his attention a carefully thought-out American scheme for allowing limited food supplies to go to the hungriest parts of occupied Europe, was singularly unconvincing. The scheme has been worked out to meet the requirements of the British blockade. It is not true that the food would go to the Germans, or that they would take an equivalent amount of food out of the country to which it would be sent. Dr. Kershner, in a broadcast on the Columbia System, some months ago, pointed out that when French children were being fed in occupied areas no child was given any food until all the supplies

allowed on the ration cards had been used up. It was not true that the Germans reduced the ration cards of the children given food; if they were to do so the imports would be immediately stopped. No question of shipping is involved, for neutral ships, which cannot be hired for war purposes, would be used. The project is limited to aiding special categories—children, nursing and expectant mothers in Norway, Holland, Belgium and France, and has been approved in both Houses of Congress. No one can seriously think that to carry it out would lengthen the war or materially help the Germans. Lord Selborne suggested that the relief sent to Greece had been of some small use to Germany. We should like to know details. But even if a trickle of extra food has gone to Germany, how little does that weigh against the moral, political and military benefits of sending aid to some of our starving Allies in Athens? Very properly a group of M.P.s and others, including Mr. Maxton and Sir Richard Acland, are addressing a public meeting on this subject at Caxton Hall on Monday, May 8th, at 6.45.

Aid to China

Wide cracks have recently appeared in the ice of pretence about the situation in China. Pretence about the military situation. China is so hungry and short of supplies that her armies cannot exploit successes when they make them, while the transport and communications are so bad that it is difficult for the Government to consolidate any general campaign. Pretence about the political and economic set-up in Chungking. The *News-Chronicle* correspondent, Stuart Gelder, has been helpful with a frank account of the reactionary tendencies of an important section of the Government and the ferocity of the censorship. Pretence too about Anglo-Chinese relations which have gone increasingly bad since the loss of the Burma road and worse since Britain's recent failure to reopen it. It is therefore particularly helpful at this moment that Mr. Eden is able to announce that the protracted negotiations for a £50,000,000 loan to China have been completed. But we note that the provision that the money must be spent in the sterling area is maintained in spite of Chinese objections. No similar condition was attached to the larger American loan to China.

A Plan for Plymouth

Professor Abercrombie, appointed by Plymouth City Council to plan the reconstruction and post-war development of their town, has done another magnificent job which rivals his work on the L.C.C. Plan for London. Here is another glimpse of the kind of town in which it will not only be a pleasure to live, but which will also conform to the pattern demanded by modern technical and social conditions. One of the chief merits of the plan is the way in which it proposes to integrate urban and rural development. Based, like the London Plan, on the neighbourhood concept, it takes full account of the traditions and local circumstances of Plymouth. In relation to the part that the national planning authority must play, the plan has important implications. The Lord Mayor, Viscount Astor, has stated that if the plan is to be carried out, immediate legislation along the lines of the Barlow and Uthwatt Reports is necessary. Every responsible person agrees upon the necessity of public control, if not ownership, of land if the reconstruction projects of local authorities are not to be warped and crippled. Even Mr. Churchill has accepted this as a fundamental principle in the Government's post-war plans. We cannot afford to wait much longer for this legislation. The other problems like the supply of men and materials are secondary to this and can be adequately dealt with by a system of priorities. But this in turn implies the continuation of wartime controls as a weapon against the chaotic development which characterised the growth of our towns after the last war. We welcome the creative imagination of men who are demonstrating that better and richer lives for our people are technically possible in the next few years. We wish we could greet with equal satisfaction the efforts of the politicians to carry through such plans.

A Tip for Cinderella

The new Service allowances are a great improvement; but they are still full of anomalies, and the other main question, that of basic rates of pay, has still not been faced. The rise for a wife from 25s. to 35s. and for children from a scale sliding downwards instead of upwards from 9s. 6d. to a new flat rate of 12s. 6d. looks generous until one remembers the incredible meanness of the scales which they replace, and judges them absolutely rather than in relation to the past. Even now the old meanness survives; or why, in heaven's name, is a soldier's widow to get less than a wife, not merely for herself but also for her children? Are orphans cheaper to keep, or is this an "economy" measure, based on the prospect of high casualties, without regard for justice? As for basic pay, the rate of advance after periods of service has been speeded up; but the main grievance remains unremedied. The serving soldier is still to be kept most unfairly short—especially if Sir John Anderson's plan to allow prices to rise a bit means, as it probably will, a considerable rise in things which are not quite necessaries, but are necessary amenities of living. Even these niggardly concessions will cost £50 millions a year—£20 millions for the wives, £18 millions for the children, and the balance for Service pay and oddments. It is not, however, clear whether this £50 millions is net or gross, and there is an ominous threat to tighten up on the existing system of supplementary grants, which ought to be relaxed and not tightened. The Service public will say, "Thank you, Sir James" for its tip; but we venture to prophesy that it will not be long before the trouble boils up again.

Business is Happy

The capitalist world is all cock-a-hoop about the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Budget speech. It is delighted with his concessions in the matter of capital expenditure on research and development—particularly the latter, which can run away with a lot of money before a new discovery reaches the commercial stage; and it is still more delighted with his promise of further concessions to come in the matter of capital expenditure on plant and buildings and the acceptance of a wider view on depreciation and obsolescence. The business bodies, from the F.B.I. downwards, have been demanding these concessions for many years, arguing that British manufacturers are hampered, especially in relation to Americans, by the differences in income-tax law between the two countries. Now they have got most of what they have been demanding, and feel pretty confident about getting the rest when the details come to be worked out—at any rate, if Sir John Anderson is still Chancellor. For our part, we are not much disposed to quarrel with the concessions, in view of the pressing need for a thorough overhaul of British methods of production. We should, indeed, not quarrel with them at all if we could feel assured that they would be accompanied by the measures needed to prevent abuse—a firm control over restrictive practices, including the sterilisation of new inventions and the concerted limitation of output, and an effective system of price-regulation based on public scrutiny of costs and methods. If the State, in order to encourage investment in improved methods of production, lets the capitalist off part of his taxes, the State must see to it that the maximum benefit accrues to the consumer in increased supplies at reduced prices.

The I.L.O. Debates

The I.L.O. Conference at Montreal is still at the stage of generalisations, which will mean little or nothing unless they are translated into concrete proposals for acceptance by the Governments. Sir Walter Citrine, among others, spoke trenchantly at an early session about the tendency of Government delegates to evade all definite commitments; and there has been a good deal of a battle over the question of the I.L.O.'s future budget. The workers' delegates want for the I.L.O. an assured income which will enable it to plan well ahead, and a greater independence of the League, or any successor to the League, than it has had in the past. The British and some other Governments and the employers' group are against voting a budget till there is a programme of work elaborated—and presumably susceptible to criticism and curtailment by the States which finance the I.L.O. as a section of the League. While these discussions have been proceeding there has been much further debate in the lobbies about the meaning of the Soviet Union's rejection of the I.L.O.'s overtures. Some attribute this largely to the Soviet Union's determination to use Axis labour for the restoration of its devastated areas; others mainly to the unwillingness of the U.S.S.R. to have its own labour conditions scrutinised by a body mainly representative of capitalist States. Plainly, most of the I.L.O.'s Conventions and Recommendations have in the past been drafted with a view to their application in capitalist countries, and the very tripartite structure of the I.L.O. implies that the dominance of capitalism is taken for granted. But these features ought not to be unalterable; and if the countries which support the I.L.O. are serious in wanting the Soviet Union to come in, they had better set about devising for it a structure which will suit Socialist as well as capitalist countries.

PARLIAMENT: Strike-breaking

Wednesday afternoon.

THE great cow, heaving itself into another position for slumber, pauses to ruminate before whisking off its special gadfly; his Party reprieved Aneurin Bevan. Most significant fact in the division which he forced against the Government's strike Regulation was the number of Labour abstentions; Bevan's friends estimate that fewer than 20 "free" Labour M.P.s (i.e. those who are not Ministers or P.P.S.s) voted for the Regulation.

The debate itself was of a fairly high order, but one-sided; few Tories bothered to speak—either because they found it embarrassing to be cheering and voting for this apotheosis of the Trade Union official, or because, more shrewdly, they realised that they now had the Labour Front for Britain in the bag. Not one of the Right-wingers who usually kick up such a fuss about Regulations—when property or the persons of Fascists are affected—murmured at all. Kirkwood seconded Bevan eloquently: Bevin, he said, was "a man who has lost his soul." Bevin, soulless or not, was at his most thunderous and torrential; his main argument was that it was really more tender to deal with this problem by Regulation, which will vanish after the war, than by a Bill, which it might be more difficult to repeal. Amid the storm of cheering and shouts of "Divide" which followed Bevin's speech, George Buchanan stood patiently in his place, resolved, as his right was, to continue the debate; his speech, as always, was deeply-felt and fiery. Acland compared strikes with boils on the neck, which you cure not by pressing them down with your thumb but by starting to lead a healthy life. Towards the end of the debate the crowd of Tories who had been summoned to the House to vote—many of them such rare attendants that Buchanan ironically suggested spying strangers—became increasingly restive. It was, after all, tea-time on Friday: "I've got a train to catch," they complained to each other. They were away before cocktail-time, conscious of having spent a gruelling afternoon in their country's service.

On Tuesday the Budget Resolutions Debate collapsed unexpectedly at about 2 p.m. There followed a desultory and disjointed Adjournment debate, in which—mostly without Ministers to reply to them—Members raised impromptu a variety of subjects. The only prearranged subject was a sad and suspicious incident—the

jection of a good tenant farmer by a building contractor who had bought his farm at an inflated price. This was raised by Ness Edwards and Bill Jackson (whom Members were glad to see back after a long illness). The usual practice of putting up a decent Labour junior Minister to defend a deplorable Tory case against Labour attack was followed; Tom Williams seemed uncomfortable in this role, but was able to show that, technically, the Minister's decision to confirm the notice to quit was in accordance with the relevant Regulation. Edwards's natural indignation betrayed him into an unfair personal attack on Williams, whose integrity and humanity are unquestioned.

After this the debate went completely haywire. Bill Brown ingeniously got away with making almost the speech he had tried to make in the strike debate on Friday (by hanging it on the peg of Bevin's week-end speech at Bristol); Mr. Speaker, being momentarily distracted, did not pull him up when he accused Bevin of a "lie." Brown is not popular with Labour Members, several of whom interrupted him. Sir Alfred Knox rose waving the *Evening Standard*, and, in the authentic voice of Blimp, denounced that day's Low cartoon as "detrimental to the war effort." ("Gad, sir, we must be free to suppress disrespectful drawings, or what's the war about?") Somehow Beverley Baxter then managed to engage the Speaker in a long and trivial discussion on the "gallantry" allowed by custom and courtesy to honourable Members who, perhaps, occupied a uniform and a chair in Whitehall during the Boer War. Raikes swung the debate back to Low and the divine immunity from criticism of Balkan kings; McKinlay said that this was "very provocative," and George Griffiths aired two coalfield compensation cases; on which the debate petered inconclusively out.

At question-time there was loud laughter when Bill Astor suggested that we ought to import wine from Palestine; Members chorussed "What would mother say?" Harcourt Johnstone got an ironical cheer of welcome; he hardly ever appears to answer questions on behalf of the Department of Overseas Trade, which is not in a state of full animation, but claims to be collecting a lot of facts. Dr. Russell Thomas asked if it wouldn't enhance his buoyancy if he unburdened himself of a few of them, and Captain Plugge managed to ask a supplementary about "his" subject radio—on which one of those painful Parliamentary wags cried "Put a plugge in it!" Sir Andrew Duncan, as usual, stonewalled on the subject of more paper for educational books.

Having often discussed Air, Fire, and Land, the House now proceeded to consider Water. Willink read an uninspired speech. Towards the end he was just beginning to poeticise it slightly with a reference to St. Francis of Assisi: alas! Andrew MacLaren, puncturer-in-chief, spoiled the whole effect by ejaculating juicily, "He never washed."

PONTIFEX MINOR

LABOUR AND THE OLD SOCIAL ORDER

ONCE again, as a European conqueror falls back before a combination of national and social forces, Britain is confronted with the choice of supporting democracy or reaction on the Continent. After the Napoleonic wars British statesmen aided Liberalism against Metternich's principle of Legitimacy. After the last war, Labour, a new and growing force in British politics, stated its case in *Labour and the New Social Order*. It opposed a purely national peace which aimed at French domination and the exclusion of Germany and the Soviet Union from the comity of nations. To-day the situation is different because the Soviet Union is no longer a pariah State in the throes of revolution, but a Great Power, which has so far borne the brunt of the fighting against the common enemy and which advances into Europe with a prestige and an appeal to which the popular forces of resistance everywhere respond. It may be that the political impact of the U.S.S.R. will surprise many of its fervent admirers, but that will not affect the fact of Europe's division into those who look to the West, as champions of the Old, and the popular forces, which see in Russia the proof that a new social order can be achieved. Already in Yugoslavia Mr. Churchill, as spokesman of tradition, has given way, on the surface at least, to the indisputable claims of the popular government; already in Italy a compromise, perhaps typical of many to come, has been accepted between the New and the Old; already in Greece, regarded as a vital sphere of British naval influence, Legitimacy is attempting, with our aid, a counter-revolution. The future in France and other countries is still obscure.

This struggle will continue during the war. It will not end with the defeat of Hitlerite Germany. The victorious Powers will not be writing on a blank sheet of paper. Even more than in 1919 they will have to recognise accomplished facts and cope with treaties and understandings made during the war itself.

In this battle, which is the real stuff of European politics to-day, Labour has a far greater part to play and a far greater share of responsibility than it had at the end of the last war. It is a partner in the British Government; those who battle for freedom on the Continent have the right to expect a special degree of aid and understanding from their more fortunate comrades here. It is therefore with something like incredulity that in studying the recent declaration about the Post-War Settlement published by the Labour Executive, we find not a single reference, direct or indirect, to the underlying battle on the Continent. The entire document is written from a national point of view; carefully avoiding the possible charge of vague idealism from which Labour has suffered in the past, it falls into the opposite trap of omitting all but the surface struggle between governments and regarding the current version of power politics as the only realism. The result in the eyes of anyone following the actual course of this struggle on the Continent is the height of unreality.

Both on national and Socialist grounds it is astonishing that the Labour Party at this stage of the war should have no word to say of Tito, or the E.A.M. movement in Greece or the building of democracy in Italy or the future of popular forces in France. More intelligible, but not more creditable, is the failure to make any analysis of the forces at work in Germany. Labour used to know that Hitler's first victim was the German workers' movement. It used to honour the martyrs whom he murdered and tortured. It excuses itself by suggesting that its former comrades no longer survive. This is not realism. The German working-class movement proved far less strong in the fight than we had the right to expect from its solid vote of twelve millions against Hitler in the terror election of 1933. It has been overwhelmed, duped and terrorised. Not until the Wehrmacht is broken shall we learn how many or how few there still are in the factories and workshops who are still capable of leadership or worthy of friendship. But there is evidence of their existence—the mounting total of weekly executions for sedition is only one but a convincing piece of evidence. Even if the workers who resist Hitler proved to be no more than a handful, this remnant should be the centre of British Labour thinking about Germany. For the same struggle to rebuild or stifle democracy that is now dividing the occupied countries will begin in Germany when the Hitler regime collapses.

This is perfectly well understood in Conservative, military and official circles. Does the Labour Party imagine that while they are talking in nursery language about "good and bad Germans," business circles here are not considering how to ensure for themselves the maximum advantages out of Germany's defeat—and out of Germans, whether good or bad? Are the leaders of British Conservatism not planning how once again, when it comes to the point, they may prevent that social revolution in Germany without which democracy stands no chance either in Germany or in Europe as a whole? It is no use talking, as this document wisely does, about reconstructing the services and economic life of Europe, if its only idea of dealing with Germany is a set of punitive measures which, taken together, would exacerbate every economic and national problem and nullify any efforts to encourage in Germany the growth of a generation able to live at peace with their neighbours.

Every student of the problem knows that though the Allies should and must occupy Germany for some undefined period, it is impossible for the occupying Powers to run the daily administration of Germany. Some Germans will be given positions of responsibility; some Germans will in time again form a Government in Germany. The Russians seem to have very definite ideas about the sort of Germany they intend to encourage and the sort of Germans who are to be given responsibility. We may be sure that the rulers of America and Britain have their ideas too. We should have thought it impossible for the Labour Party to avoid some suggestions on the subject, some realisation that the balance of class power in Germany is important. Perhaps they intend to produce a further document on this subject, analysing the situation within Germany, the prospects of a workers' opposition appearing once the Gestapo is destroyed, the possibility or otherwise of collaborating with that considerable section of the German Church that opposes the Nazis and the part they believe the anti-Nazis exiled abroad may be able to play in the future Reich. It may occur to them that there are lessons to be learnt from the, in many respects, different conditions of liberated Italy. There, too, the problem has been to recreate democracy after the defeat of Fascism. The essentials are to see that Fascist organisations are rooted out, to bestow the gift of a free Press and an accurately informative radio, to revive the trade unions and political Parties, and to discover in each locality democratic leaders who in time may be in a position to form a democratic Central Government. Here one would have expected constructive suggestions from the Labour Party.

In Germany, too, as in Italy, the Labour Party might well aid in the formulation of the conditions which must accompany every surrender, whether technically unconditional or not. Unconditional surrender means that the defeated Power accepts the victor's conditions without argument; it does not, and cannot in the nature of things, mean that there are no conditions. And the nature of these conditions may decide whether or not every German sells his life as dearly as possible, killing in the process many Allied soldiers for whose lives we at this moment are praying in our churches and in our hearts. Dr. Goebbels has sedulously implanted in the minds of German soldiers the lie that the Allies intend to kill or castrate all German prisoners of war. This lie is apparently believed throughout the German army. We cannot believe that at this vital moment the Labour Party's message to Germany can fail to contain, even though belatedly, an assurance to German workers that we intend not their destruction, but their emancipation. It is remarkable, but often unnoticed, that the underground press of countries that have suffered most terribly under German occupation, persistently quotes instances of co-operation between German and foreign workers inside Germany and, while bitter in its hatred of gauleiters and quislings, speaks often of the day when German and foreign workers can unite once more. Odd, that the British Labour movement should lag so far behind and accept as gospel the official views of exiled Governments, ignoring altogether those whose day-by-day resistance in Europe is in fact creating the Europe of the future.

As we read and reread this Labour pronouncement and concentrate, as we must, on this essential

element within it, even to the exclusion of comment on its other proposals, we are struck by the fact that there is not a trace of Socialist thinking in it. There are some general phrases about Socialism at the beginning; and at the end, perhaps because the omission had struck the authors just as it has struck us there is, by way of decoration, a trite and conventional peroration which assures us that war is inherent in a capitalist society. We are reminded of the client who complained that there was not much architecture about the house offered to him. "No," said the builder, "we add the architecture afterwards."

TRAINING OF TEACHERS

THAT we are in great danger of falling into the ditch which we are digging with the new Education Bill nearly everyone is aware. Schools will take time to build; but they can be built much more rapidly than we have been used to building them if we have the sense to use new methods. Teachers, however, cannot be built like schools; prefabrication and standardisation, so far from helping, will only result in an output of even shoddier goods. And teachers, much more than school buildings, are the crux of the educational problem. We are pledged to *secondary* education for all; and that means both considerably higher staffing ratios—the most urgent reform of all—and higher-grade teaching for great cohorts of children for whom *elementary* education is no longer regarded as enough.

First there is the urgent problem of getting our schools back to a tolerable level of efficiency and of providing, at the same time, schooling up to 15 at least, and for as many as possible beyond 15, and of starting, also at the same time, the new Young People's Colleges which are to supply part-time teaching up to 18. It has been reckoned by a good many educationists who ought to know that at present the average boy or girl, on leaving school at 14, stands about where the average stood at 13 before the war made havoc of the schools. Of course, the loss has been much greater in some areas, and much less in others: it is a mixed product of evacuation muddle, failure to enforce school attendance, and shortage of teachers leading both to the return of the untrained pupil-teacher and to classes of utterly unmanageable size. Then there is the longer-run problem of securing, after the immediate emergency has been met, a much larger regular annual flow of recruits into all branches of the teaching profession and of providing a better training for them.

The McNair Committee, which has just issued its long-awaited Report on the Supply, Recruitment and Training of Teachers and Youth Leaders,* is only concerned with the longer term problem of permanent supply. The Board of Education has taken the short-run problem into its own hands, and is making interim provision for various forms of training and recruitment of which the details have not been published. Clearly, the two aspects are closely connected; for if, in order to get enough teachers in a hurry, we admit many thousands of unsatisfactory recruits into the teaching profession, it will not be easy to get rid of them afterwards. There arises, accordingly, an intermediate problem; for if we rush into the schools a great many inadequately prepared teachers, there will be a moral obligation to release subsequently for further education or training those who seem likely to profit by it. This problem, presumably because it is regarded as part of the emergency aspect, goes untreated in the McNair Report; but it is likely to turn out a matter of the greatest importance.

In relation to the long-run problem, the clearest and most unequivocal recommendation of the McNair Committee is that there must be, not merely a rise, but a really big rise, in teachers' salaries, and especially in the salaries to which teachers can look forward as they gain experience and incur increasing responsibilities. The Report tellingly compares the *maximum* salaries to which teachers of various types can look forward with those paid in other professions, notably the Civil Service. For example, an entrant to the Civil Service who enters in or is transferred to the Junior Executive Grade, starting at 16 or at 18, can look forward, at 40, to a salary of £510, whereas the maximum for a certificated teacher is £348, under Scale III of the Burnham Scale, which applies to nearly two-thirds of the elementary teachers holding certificates. These rates are for men: for women the comparable figures are £405 at 35 and £274. Teachers in secondary schools can be better compared with Civil Servants of the Administrative Class. A Civil Servant who rises to be an Assistant Secretary has a salary range of from £1,150 to £1,500. An assistant master in a secondary school can hardly rise above £600, even with special allowances, and even if he becomes a headmaster he is most unlikely to rise above £1,000. There are only eight headmasterships in State secondary schools with a *maximum* salary of over £1,100. These, again, are men's rates; for women the comparison would be at least as disadvantageous to the teacher.

To those who urge that teachers are worth no more, or the supply would have failed long ago, the answer is that the supply of teachers has been artificially maintained by means of the "pledge." Thousands of teachers have been bribed into the profession, not because they wanted to enter it, but because a pledge to become teachers was the only way in which they could get a higher education. Almost everyone agrees that the "pledge" ought to go, because it is highly undesirable to coerce boys and girls into becoming teachers whether they are likely to make good and happy teachers or not; but abolition of the "pledge" is clearly impracticable unless (a) the State subsidises higher education on a much larger scale for entrants to all professions which require it, and (b) the attractions of teaching are greatly increased, in terms not only of salaries, but also of size of classes and working conditions as a whole. The "pledge" ought to go; but with it must go the current underpayment of teachers, which is a legacy from the days when the State deliberately set out to provide a cheap and nasty *ersatz* education for the poor.

So far all is clear; but when we come to the provision to be made for the training of teachers the fog descends. At present there are two separate kinds of training, apart from the special arrangements for technical teachers, art teachers, physical instructors, and certain other groups. The main stream of teachers comes to the elementary schools from the Teachers' Training Colleges, which provide a two-years' or very exceptionally a three-years' course, starting at 18. Side by side with these Colleges are the University Training Departments, in which students normally spend a year after three years in the University as degree students (though some do not take a degree); and the U.T.D. students provide the main stream to secondary schools, but also send many teachers into the elementary schools, particularly Senior and Central Schools for the older children. This double system is thoroughly unsatisfactory. It is bad to segregate the intending teacher in a specialised Training College, where he or she meets only other intending teachers; and it is the worse because most Training Colleges, though not all, are small, ill-equipped, and poorly staffed. Many of them are in remote places where they cannot easily call on the help of Universities or Technical Colleges, or co-operate one with another in furnishing a sufficiently wide range of teaching. As against this, most University Training Departments are at least as unsatisfactory, because the Universities treat them as poor relations, and their staff and equipment are also quite inadequate.

Given time, it seems clear that the right course is for all teachers, except art and technical teachers and a few of the special groups, to go to a University, and take a degree as well as getting the requisite professional training, and for Training Colleges as such to disappear together with the system of premature earmarking as teachers involved in the "pledge." But this would require a fundamental change in the attitude of the Universities towards the teaching profession as a whole, and also the foundation of quite a number of new Universities in order to avoid swelling those now in existence to an unmanageable size. It would involve a great deal of new building, a great development of University staffs, and an extensive change in University curricula. All these things are necessary; but they cannot all be done at once. On this issue the McNair Committee, which is otherwise united, divides itself equally. Five members wish at once to bring the entire system of training under University auspices, by means of regional University Schools of Education of which both U.T.D.s and Training Colleges would become integral parts; whereas the other five wish to establish a system of Joint Boards, representing Universities, Training Colleges, and Local Education Authorities to promote closer co-operation between all the bodies concerned, but so as to leave the Training Colleges as a permanently separate element within the co-ordinated system.

Not a word is said in the Report about the religious issue; but it is plausible to suggest that the fact that many of the existing Training Colleges are sectarian (mostly C. of E.) may not have been without influence on the desire to ensure their continuance as separate institutions. The Church Colleges are, with exceptions, among the worst, smallest, and mostly poorly equipped. They are mostly quite incapable, unless the State is to provide masses of money for them, of coming up to a satisfactory standard or of providing for the wide range of studies needed. Again, it looks as if religious vested interest is likely to stand dangerously in the way of reforms that are plainly needed upon educational grounds. Moreover, the system of Joint Boards has been tried: it is actually in existence now, and has decisively failed to achieve the results expected of it. The five members propose to give their Joint Boards wide powers; but what hope is there that any joint board system will either persuade the Universities to take their responsibilities in this field seriously, or bring about effective co-ordination of a large number of isolated Colleges spread about the country in no sort of relation to needs?

The alternative solution, of bringing the entire provisions under the auspices of University Schools of Education, is vastly preferable, provided only that it is accompanied by real and far-reaching University reform, including the foundation of a sufficient number of new Universities to absorb the greatly increased number of students who will be wanted not only as teachers and youth leaders, but also over a wide range of other growing professions, including the social services in all their aspects.

The McNair Report covers many matters besides those with which it has been possible to deal in this article. It deals with the training of youth leaders as well as teachers, and with the training of technical and art teachers as well as of teachers in "general subjects." But its handling of all these specialist problems is distinctly amateurish and often vague. The Committee was not particularly well qualified to deal with these questions, and its Report reads as if it knew this. But the most important criticism of the McNair Report, which contains much that is excellent, is that it does not voice with sufficient clarity the demand to give up trying to train boys and girls in specialised institutions without ensuring that they get a sound general education as a basis. The proposal to extend the Training College course from two to three years is quite inadequate to achieve this, unless it is accompanied by a really radical reform of the institutions through which the training is done.

*H.M.S.O. 2s.

A LONDON DIARY

I AM glad to see that the motion to deprive Aneurin Bevan of the Labour Party Whip has been deferred. Logically fifteen other M.P.s including Grenfell, an ex-Minister, would have had to go with him into a wilderness, that might have proved populous. After all about seventy Labour M.P.s abstained from voting in support of the Government's No Strike Order, and I believe that when the Trade Union rank and file understand its implications, they will increasingly rally to the opponents of the Order. The Executive may itself want to demand its repeal before long and would be wise to let drop the matter of Aneurin Bevan's indiscipline.

* * *

In his Bristol speech Ernest Bevin thundered out anathemas not only at Bevan and Laski, but at all the "intellectuals" in the Party. Mr. Bevin, who has at times been very willing to collaborate with intellectuals, would, I am sure, agree that in the days when he was himself a leader of the Left, he found some of his most trustworthy colleagues among members of that section of the Labour Party. Intellectual, you see, is just a word of abuse. It doesn't mean people who are intellectual; it means those who owe their position in the Party not to a trade union organisation, but to their popularity among the individual membership. The attacks on Laski are significant because the Professor is Vice-President of the Party this year, and presumably next year's President. Behind these attacks there seems also to be an indirect blow at Herbert Morrison, who is probably regarded by most of the constituent parties, and indeed by all but certain trade union leaders, as the most natural future leader of the Labour Party. The danger, as I see it, is not of the formation of a separate Trade Union Party—there was talk of that in similar circumstances in the last war—but of an attempt by Ernest Bevin and others to work in with the big employers, so that for a moment after the war England would become a sort of semi-organised corporate State. That would be to make the worst of both worlds. For Labour would not long accept this status, and the benefits of co-operation with the employers would be lost at the same time as the advantages of independence. After all, the war will not be long over before the rank and file will be worrying about losses of freedom during the war—and no one will believe that the latest anti-Strike Regulation was really required by the paramount needs of the military situation—and they will recall with gratitude the names of that handful of leaders who have dared to stand up to the powers-that-be during the war itself.

* * *

The constituent elements of the "Free German Movement" in Britain are likely, I gather, to fall apart. The Communist members of the Executive of this organisation (founded after the appearance of "Free Germans" in the U.S.S.R.) were still early in this year opposing proposals for the annexation of German territories. They changed their attitude when it was reported that Stalin and Churchill had agreed at Teheran that "compensation" should be given to the Poles out of German territory. Ceasing to attack Vansittartism, as a wicked doctrine that no Marxist could ever hold, British and German Communists began to denounce those who wanted to affirm the principles of the Atlantic Charter on the ground that this document (once agreed to by Stalin) was disruptive of the Teheran agreement. For years the German Communists exaggerated the strength of the underground movement in Hitlerite Germany (again a phrase agreed upon between Stalin and Churchill) and confidently predicted a German revolution. They now justify every proposal for punishing Germany as a nation on the ground of the collective responsibility of the German people. The last straw was a telegram sent by the Communist secretary of the Free German Movement to Dr. Benes in which they acknowledge, in grovelling terms, "the guilt and the responsibility of the German people." As a result Dr. August Weber, the veteran ex-chairman of the German Liberal Party, has resigned from the Committee, and his example will be followed by other Liberal and Socialist members. How long it will be before the Communists will again be asking for a united front of anti-Nazi Germans to work together in accordance with a Moscow blue-print for a democratic Germany after the war I do not know.

* * *

Interviews with Stalin were always rare and often legendary events. Nowadays they are so infrequent that a stream of speculation follows anyone who calls at the Kremlin. What, for instance, brought the Polish-American priest, Father Orlemanski, on the long journey to Moscow? What part is he playing in the tangle of Soviet-Polish relations? The press had little to say about him. Yet clearly he travelled with the consent and perhaps the assistance of the State Department. Then, next day, I had my answer. In the post was a pamphlet sent by a friend in the United States which contained speeches made by Orlemanski and his travelling companion, Professor Oscar Lange. Both of them, it seems, are bitterly opposed to the Polish Government in London, and see in the Union of Polish Patriots the true voice of those Poles who desire friendship and co-operation with the U.S.S.R. Orlemanski, particularly, insisted that Mikolajzyck and Sosnkowski had no right to speak for all the five million Americans of Polish descent. He is the organiser of the Koskiusko Leagues which are being set up all over the U.S.A. on a pro-Soviet basis. Lange is an economist who stayed in this country on his way from Poland to America some years before the war. He is sensible and able and academic in his approach. The natural deduction from this visit is that Stalin, despairing of any negotiation here, has made up his mind to by-pass the Polish Government in London, and that the State Department agrees that it is desirable for there to be more direct contact between Moscow and American Polish opinion.

* * *

A. P. Wadsworth, who succeeds W. P. Crozier as editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, first made a name as Irish correspondent during the worst of the "troubles" after the last war. Then he settled down to make himself the best Labour correspondent in the country. Scores of people in the Labour and Trade Union movements sought him out every year at annual conferences, regarding him not only as the safest repository of gossip, but also as one of the sanest observers with whom they could discuss the problems and policies of the working-class movement. During those years he led a double life, managing by working long into the small hours after his midnight return from the office to complete a massive and authoritative history of the Lancashire cotton industry. A Rochdale boy, he began research as a member of R. H. Tawney's famous W.E.A. class there. He lived, when I knew him best, largely between two rooms—a study at home piled from floor to ceiling with second-hand books, and his room at the *Guardian* office, in which the current literature of industry and Labour at home and abroad, was heaped up in a staggering confusion. It was his absurd boast that he could always lay his hand on any document he wanted. In those days he thought he was not cut out for a leader-writer. He learned better later on and now ascends into the large chair in the tidy room where C. P. Scott sat and ruled for so many years.

* * *

"Emergency" is the word to keep firmly in mind when considering the Ministry of Works factory-made house. A settlement of these naive-looking bungalows is unthinkable as a permanent feature of the landscape, but they are pleasanter to look at than many curious structures that spatter Canvey Island or some reaches of the Thames. The sand finish of the exterior gives a little texture to the steel-plated walls, and the general effect inside is light and fresh. The kitchen and bathroom fitments are superb; this sort of thing has been done for years in "luxury" flats, inevitably with a better finish, but often not so well designed. Picture the kitchen stacked with the washing-up for four, and it becomes obvious that the housewife will have to plan to the last inch if the space is to be adequate. The same applies to the living-room and two bedrooms, which are fair-sized, with good built-in cupboards, but no room for the essential inessentials. One can't escape the impression of sharp corners and flimsiness, or the knowledge that when the paint wears off the unsympathetic metal surfaces will look indescribably shabby. The paint on the sink, which every housewife will laugh at, is only there, the guide said, because "We could not get the material we wanted." This should have been explained at the outset, just as it would have been wiser to say that the floor-covering is upside down for the sake of appearances. But it seems that the test of the houses is one of performance. Will they be like little ovens in the summer (as the warm afternoon seemed to suggest) and icy in the winter, in spite of the well-designed heating? And what will happen when the wireless is full on and someone in a temper bangs a reverberating cupboard door? If these houses live up to the experts' promises, thousands of couples will start off gaily enough in them, and move out thankfully when the second child arrives.

* * *

The officials have not been allowed to forget this problem of the "second child." It was forcibly brought to their attention when I was in the bungalow by an energetic Scottish friend who marched about asking in a loud voice, "Where does the second baby go?" A timid official said, "The houses are only temporary. They are only meant for ten years." He was met by the crushing rejoinder, "What young couple want only one child in ten years? What about the population?"

* * *

What Socialist speaker has ever summarised his case as perfectly as this?

> For India 1943 was a year of conflicting experiences: practically universal financial prosperity on the one hand and a distressing shortage of foodstuffs in certain parts of the country on the other.

This is taken from the speech of the chairman of the National Bank of India on May 2nd. Every word is golden. CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to R. Lewis.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Mr. Wakefield (Cons.): I want to enter a protest against the assertion that the B.B.C. is being used as a medium for the Tory Party. The Leader of the Labour Party, the Deputy Prime Minister, has spoken on the B.B.C., putting forward the policy of the National Government in exactly the same way as the Prime Minister.—*Parliamentary Report.*

After the last war the Germans, by means of brutal inflation and later of barefaced robbery of Allied funds, put their industry into a marvellous state of technical perfection. We after this war plan to do the same thing in an honourable way.—*Evening Express.*

How to become a Born Teacher.—*Teachers' World*

One big disappointment is the refusal to modify E.P.T. during the war. Such a concession would more than anything have helped industrialists to build up reserves for the post-war era. This is not a matter of politics, but politics appear once more to have influenced the decision.—*Daily Mail.*

THE PRESENT POSITION OF CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION

I SUPPOSE it may be said that our treatment of C.O.s in this war has been better than it was in the last; I know at least that it commonly *is* said. But not much better. Some 57,000 men have been before the Tribunals. Of these 3,500 have been prosecuted and have served sentences of imprisonment—in some cases repeated sentences—for their refusal to accept the Tribunal's decision. Under the National Service Acts a man may go to prison for broadly one or other of three reasons. First, refusal of medical examination; secondly, refusal to obey orders on the part of those who, having passed their medical examination, are deemed to be in the Army. The National Service (Armed Forces) Act, 1939, and the National Service (Number Two) Act, 1941, give the right to a further Tribunal hearing if the sentence is one of three months or more imprisonment. Cat-and-mouse treatment, that is to say repeated imprisonment for the same offence, arises either (1) because of the repeated refusal of Tribunals to recognise the genuineness of a man's objection, even when he has already gone to prison for the sake of his convictions (thus, Stanley Hilton has received five court-martial sentences, totalling eight years' imprisonment and detention, of which, however, he only served a part before his sincerity was finally admitted at his fifth tribunal hearing). Or (2) because of the practice whereby courts martial sentence a man to detention in military barracks instead of to prison. A man so sentenced has no right of review by a Tribunal when the sentence has been served. This practice seems to me to defeat the plain intention of Parliament which sought to provide the loophole of a further Tribunal hearing with the express intention of preventing "cat-and-mouse" treatment. In respect of cases falling within these two categories our record of treatment is not, I think, conspicuously superior to our performance in the last war.

In this war, however, the authorities have been confronted with a new problem arising out of the establishment of the various Civil Defence services; under this heading I include fire watching, service in the Home Guard and industrial conscription. It was in the nature of the case inevitable that some men should extend their objection to conscription for military service to participation in any service which was more or less directly ancillary to the waging of the war; or rather, that they should object to being compelled to take part in any such service.

The number of men who have been punished for refusal to take part in any of the duties or services connected with Civil Defence was, at the end of January 1944, nearly eleven hundred, and many of these had served several sentences. Outstanding among these cases is that of George Elphick, who has been prosecuted eight times and who recently appealed against the fifth sentence of imprisonment imposed upon him because of his refusal to do fire watching. The appeal was heard at the East Sussex Quarter Sessions at Lewes early in March and was duly rejected. Elphick was given the alternative of a £10 fine or a further two months' imprisonment; he chose the latter and proceeded to serve his fifth sentence. (Recently his fine was paid and he was released on April 6th.) The case presented a number of interesting features; for example, Mr. Harold Brown, speaking on behalf of the Town Clerk, by whom the prosecution was officially brought, admonished Elphick as "a man who is willing to take all the rights and privileges without sacrificing one little bit of comfort to carry out his duties." This from a man living, we venture to hope, in a comfortable home to another man choosing to go to prison for a fifth term, when he had only to say the word of acquiescence to enjoy the pleasures of returning to a comfortable home of his own, is rich; very rich.

It is to be noted that the question whether Elphick's objection to fire watching is genuinely conscientious does not arise, since the question whether a man may legitimately object to fire watching on conscientious grounds does not itself arise. As the Chairman of the Committee put it in giving judgment,

> this Committee has nothing whatever to do with the question whether conscientious objectors ought or ought not to have conscientious scruples about doing certain work. It is not for this tribunal, it is for the State. The State has declared that conscientious scruples shall permit a man not to do certain types of work. But the State has also declared that these conscientious scruples are no answer to the claim of the State for certain services; and one of those services—whether a man is a conscientious objector or not—is fire watching.

Since the State does not permit exemption from fire watching on conscientious grounds, Elphick is regarded as a common or garden evader. Of no avail his representative's plea that he is prepared and indeed anxious voluntarily to assist and succour anybody in time of danger. He has broken the law and, as he has broken it repeatedly, the magistrates were, according to their lights, very lenient in imposing a fine of only £10. They might, as the Chairman very properly pointed out, have imposed the maximum fine of £100. In fact, it would have been the logical thing to do.

Can a case be made out for this differentiation of treatment between military service and Civil Defence service objectors? I do not see that it can. We cannot but admit, in the first place, that the logic of the matter is with the objector to Civil Defence and industrial conscription. The case has been often argued, but no amount of argument has produced a convincing answer to the contention "if I think it wrong that I should kill, it must also be wrong for me to release another man to do my killing for me by serving in the Home Guard; or to make explosives in a factory which will enable other men to take the action which I refuse; or to hew coal which will enable the explosives to be made; or, even, to assist my country to wage war by enabling it by my fire watching to sustain with greater confidence and less damage the destructive action of the belligerent enemy."

You may say that it is unreasonable to carry things to extremes; that logic should not be applied so remorselessly to life; that we must draw the line somewhere, and so on. You may say these things and I daresay you will be right. But what you must not do is to deny the logic of the Civil Defence objector. The objector again makes a valid point when he affirms his unwillingness to accept the orders of an authority which he cannot recognise and so to confess himself a part of the military machine, even when the machine bids him to the work of rescue. Nobody supposes that Elphick and the rest would refuse to put out fire bombs, rescue people from piles of *débris*, or save life whenever they got the chance; nobody, I think, supposes that they shirk danger or hard work. But they refuse to do these things under orders when the ordering authority is the executive organ of a society whose major preoccupation is the organisation of mass slaughter.

In this respect the Civil Defence objector is on stronger ground than the military service objector. The soldier faces physical agony in its grossest form, and must reckon with the ever-present possibility of sudden death. Men instinctively fear pain and death; therefore, it was always possible to represent the military service objector as a coward who had trumped up a conscience in order to rationalise and indulge his cowardice. Most people did, perhaps still do, so regard him. But the man who goes to prison rather than fire watch or work in a factory is much less exposed to this charge. In fact, the charge of cowardice becomes ludicrously inappropriate. Nor is there any chance that at this late stage of the war the number of objectors, either to the military or the Civil Defence services, will be large enough to endanger the safety of the State. Nobody can pretend that the presence or absence from the services of eleven hundred men and three hundred and forty women—the number who have been prosecuted for the refusal of Civil Defence services, industrial conscription, etc.—will make any difference to the winning or the losing of the war; or even delay the winning by an hour. Is it, then, too late to suggest that the law should be amended in such a way as to give the Civil Defence objector the same rights and the same chance, therefore, of escaping continually renewed terms of imprisonment as the military service objector? It is on any reckoning an anomaly that in a war for freedom we should compel men to fight, and take away their freedom if they refuse to be compelled. Parliament in the last war had the sense to perceive the anomaly and in theory conceded the freedom to refuse, only to find that small men, blinded by patriotism or influenced by petty spite, defied the plain intention of the law. Hence the melancholy record of the treatment of conscientious objectors in the last war.

This time we have done better. Mr. Chamberlain gave a pledge before the outbreak of war to the effect that "where scruples are conscientiously held, they should be respected, and there should be no persecution of those who hold them." In March, 1941, Mr. Churchill implemented the pledge. "The rights," he said, "which have been granted in this war and the last to conscientious objectors are well known and are a definite part of British policy. Anything in the nature of persecution, victimisation or man-hunting is odious to the British people."

On the whole our treatment of conscientious objectors in this war has not been ungenerous. We have not, as have the Americans, refused unconditional exemption, and we have not permitted the luxury of a conscience only to those who are members of religious bodies; we have not, as have the Germans, executed them out of hand. It would be a pity if we blotted the copy book which posterity will read by refusing to make the small modification in the law which would confer the right of exemption upon those who extend their objection from the sphere of military action into that of Civil Defence and industrial conscription. These men, too, are entitled to a loophole through which they may creep to evade the repeated blows of the official paw for the same offence.

C. E. M. JOAD

FREEDOM IN MAURITIUS

IT is characteristic of the British attitude to the Colonial Empire that nothing fundamental is done for the people of forgotten territories until they resort to violent action to draw attention to their troubles. This is true of the West Indies in the years before the war; it is also true of the island of Mauritius, where a climax was reached last autumn when labour demonstrations resulted in a considerable number of casualties among estate workers after the police and military, employing rifles, batons and tear gas, suppressed what were called "riots and sabotage." A Commission of Inquiry has since been appointed, and although its Report is not yet published, it is clear that the riots were nothing less than the latest chapter in a long history of working-class discontent, trade union victimisation and bad labour conditions.

How else were the workers to draw attention to their grievances? The existing constitution effectively bars workers' representatives from the Council by the usual high property and income qualifications, and out of a total population of almost half a million there are now about 10,000 voters. Approximately 25 per cent. of the white population are voters; 1 per cent. of the Indian population has the franchise. For years there has been talk of reform. Colonial Secretaries have come and gone, making promises one year and evasions the next. Sometimes the constitution has been the subject of "informal discussion," sometimes it has been "under consideration," and now it is being covered by "personal" discussion between the Governor and Sir Cosmo

Parkinson, who has been visiting the island. Still, nothing has been done, and the evil conditions in the Colony continue.

It is not that the Government knew nothing of the discontent that was brewing, for there have been similar riots before: once the Labour Party was suppressed and the workers' leaders deported. The Commissioner of Police stated in evidence before the latest Commission of Inquiry that he had received reports from his Secret Service of impending trouble some five months before it actually took place; and in any case, on any reasonable interpretation of the conditions under which the greater part of the population live, an outbreak of strikes and riots was only to be expected.

Health conditions in the island are lamentable, with widespread malaria, hookworm, anaemia, and avitaminosis. Most of the labourers are undernourished to such an extent that the health and weight of prisoners undergoing sentence shows a marked improvement. The consequence of this ill-health is to make the Mauritius labourer definitely expensive, and his output inferior to that which prevails in similar occupations even in the West Indies. His strength is so limited that he finds it impossible as a rule to work more than six hours a day for a five-day week. Indeed, Major Orde Browne, Labour Advisor to the Colonial Office, whom nobody can accuse of making rashly impetuous statements, summed the matter up by saying that the people comprise "a poorly paid, undernourished, sickly population, capable only of such a limited output of work that an increase of wages offers little promise of improved performance."

The root cause of this is, of course, the poor dietary level upon which the people live, dependent as it is, or was, on rice, and in which such things as milk, meat and dairy produce rarely appear. Sugar dominates the Mauritius economy to such an extent that only a very small proportion of the agricultural land is available for food production, and although the island could easily be self-supporting, almost all the food has to be imported. Since the war, too, imported foodstuffs have become scarce, and rice unobtainable. Food prices are at unprecedented levels, such things as flour, beans, fats, having risen in price from 100 to 200 per cent.; and as wage levels have not followed suit, what was a meagre diet before the war has now brought the people to the brink of starvation, especially as unfamiliar imported foods have not been popular among a population conservative in this respect.

The fact is that the workers cannot afford to feed themselves properly. At the time of Orde Browne's investigation (before the latest increase in the cost of living) able-bodied labourers were receiving during the inter-crop season 66 cents for a day of eight hours' work. During the crop season this rose to Rs.1.25 (a rupee is roughly equivalent to 1*s.* 6*d.*). Less efficient workers were receiving 50 cents for a day of seven hours' work. Wage increases since this survey have not kept real wages even up to this low level. Inquiry has shown that the cost of supporting a labourer, his wife and two children in Mauritius is about Rs.35 per month. A labourer usually can work no more than 22 days per month, which at recent rates meant an income of Rs.27.50 in the crop season of about four months, and Rs.14.66 in the remainder of the year—which has obvious implications for the well-being of the labourer and his family. After the September riots of last year the Minimum Wage Board recommended a wage increase, but it seems that it will not apply to day-workers, and it is expected that after this year's crop, employers will dismiss all monthly workers, to re-employ them on a daily basis, thus avoiding the new rates.

Can the workers do nothing to remedy this by union activity? The answer is doubtful because every possible obstacle is put in the way of union organisation. As it stands, the trade union legislation is not even up to the minimum standard laid down by the Colonial Development and Welfare Act, so that the Colony is therefore not eligible for grants of assistance under the Act. Colonel Stanley has promised to set about seeking some reform, but there are still no signs that any active steps toward improvement have been made. Moreover, employers as a whole regard the Industrial Associations, as they are called, as not far short of subversive, and members are penalised. This occurs despite a provision to the contrary in the law, while suspicion has been strong, and not unjustifiably so, that the Government has actively and passively allied itself with the employers' interests.

All this is but the outline of the evil circumstances which led the workers to take the steps they did last autumn to call attention to their needs. Why were things allowed to get as bad as they are? It is probable that had the British Labour Party as a whole been actively interested in the fate of their fellows in Mauritius, the Colonial Office might have been successfully urged into action. But the island is known here, if it is known at all, only to stamp-collectors. It is time we remembered the isolated outposts of Empire, where exploitation only too often goes unchecked by an informed public opinion at home.

The Duke of Devonshire's friendly reply to the recent Lords debate on Mauritius may indicate the growth in the Colonial Office of a new sense of our responsibility. BERTRAM HUTCHINSON

AN AFTERNOON AT THE ZOO

APRIL—the cruellest month, as Mr. Eliot reminds us — has come and gone with almond, rhubarb, White Papers, double summer-time, Hitler's birthday, painters on ladders, Easter, cherry and chestnut, Mr. Max Miller at the Palladium. We have hung up our overcoats and shivered. Burton is off the tap. The Royal Academy opens its doors to some, while others prefer the fauna of the Royal Zoological Gardens. I have found myself, caught in the Spring cycle, looking for the 74 bus that plies round Regent's Park.

The buses are rationed; so are the buns when you get there, and the bears to give them to. Austerity hits the bear harder than you or me. He has a very sweet tooth, old Bruin, which only unlimited lump-sugar can satisfy; and for years he had been working up his act, saluting us, beckoning to the uncharitable, trying out a dance step or two, for the sake of the necessary. He still, like an old actor, sketches a gesture, grumbles in passing. But the audience, so far as he is concerned, has gone. We who stand round, clucking or holding out empty hands, are mere empty rows in what once was a theatre. Life—a scummy pond, a well-worn rockery—is on all-fours again. He shows his back, which has a derisive face of a sort, and walks off with the splayed gait of a retired official.

Two others accompany him. Round and round they trudge, in aimless preoccupation, until an old gentleman, looking like a meeker Tolstoy, approaches the enclosure, tin in hand. Three heads come round; tin opens; "Fingers!" says the old gentleman; and the paw that has stretched through the bars palm upwards turns over to receive between its claws a titbit of—what can it be in these days?—delicious cheese-rind. One remembers that old man from visits in previous years; I have known him tickle the vulture.

Near by, a pavilion is in ruins, and no longer does the camel—that warty and supercilious cynic—rest his chin on the railings to gaze at what must surely have been the most entrancing spectacle in London: the flying gibbons. How they used to hoot and chirrup and swing! No camel, and only a pair of gibbons, one black, the other white, sitting aloft with their arms twined round one another. In the Monkey House there is a third gibbon, close enough to touch; if one thought to touch this aristocrat. Beautifully seated he stares over one shoulder with a gaze meant for the portrait painter. Sad, do you think? Pensive rather, lightly and inscrutably composed, as though resisting the degeneration that has overtaken others: next door, for example, there is a vulgarian who screams and batters on the wire-netting, while across the way a slattern, rising from her couch of straw, displays an alarmingly raw bustle . . . Green monkeys and woolly monkeys and pigtailed monkeys; sooty mangabey and wanderoo; the drill, the weeper capuchin, the baboon, the chimp, the orang-utan, the marmoset. Some are frisky, some dour; you can choose, for leadership, between the almost human chimp and the god-like mandrill. I don't remember having seen before the moustache monkey, who gets his name from a moustache, painted on like Groucho's, but white in colour. Among them, after recognising most of my friends, I see myself. Disturbing. And should I, if I ever had to serve a sentence, be as calm and playful as these prisoners? They have the amenities of, say, an 18B detainee. They pick over a bundle of straw, the equivalent of an evening paper, or search the head of a companion for (we are assured) tiny grains of salt. They day-dream and enjoy a shindy, like schoolboys with the master out of the room. They play and scratch and yawn; they are sunk in gloom. Then, inexplicably, something the other side of glass or bars seizes their attention. Looks of fury, guilt, impishness, delight break out. Have they been reminded of their Keeper? Maybe; or maybe, as with us, a vague intimation of kinship wafts from humanity to disturb the tedium.

People aren't always, I'm afraid, at their best in the Monkey House; some even feel impelled to outvie the monkeys, and meet snarl with snarl, raspberry with raspberry. The smell finally, after I have made the circuit twice, drives me out into sunlight where I can draw a deep breath and step, if I wish, into the rockery which once harboured snakes. Satire is forgotten; introspection takes an easier turn; I plunge, feeling for sixpence, into the velvet corridors of the Aquarium.

Here, the selection from Boulenger's pre-war riches provides a miraculous series of illuminations. I'd rather gaze at these than at the coloured glass of Chartres. Some of the liquid tableaux remain transfixed except for a plume of bubbles and the gentle palpitation of the fish; no good whistling or tapping the glass, one can never signal to these strangers in another world. But then, walking on, you come to a scene, exquisitely imagined, of action. All is darting movement, whisked tails, startled eyes. An eel buries itself in sand, or travels nervously, with a sinuous motion which it can reverse when starting back at a touch. Contact, even in sex, is distasteful to the fish, but then his whole life is spent in the embrace of the element which is his God. The curious will discover the axolotl, the zebra fish, but no seahorse or transparent neon fish; and with fewer shoals baffling the eye, one lingers to admire those beauties from home waters, the trout and the tench. It is a short step in imagination (though quite a long way as Zoo-trotting goes) to the Insect House where, as in Victorian paper-weights, the brine shrimp and the fresh-water louse are held up for examination. A water-boatman paddles upside-down on his ceiling of water. The land insects, immovable hunting beetles and scorpions, belong to some nightmare of desert or jungle in which a curtain is about to fall on a last act of tragedy. A shudder passes into the onlooker (this corridor is always dank), or the attempt to shrug it off with a word deepens horror. "Oh," said the bothered matron next to me, "don't want to look at them; plenty of them at home!" *They* were two bird-eating spiders, the size of small fists. What sort of home, one speculated, as she tugged off little Tommy to go for a ride on a hee-haw.

But there are beauties even in the Insect House. The glossy green beetles (rose chafers) tumble over one another like escaped brooches; one lies on its back, helpless as a knight in armour, while the enjoyment and the strife go on around. And in the elephant hawk-moth (British Isles), a satiny knot of pinks melting into yellows, one recognises a paragon of moths. I think of my moths at home (something comes home to me, too!), common variety, which have made their Anzio in a sofa, and resist all killings, every onslaught of Paradichlorbenzene. This battle has been going on for many weeks; the moths are smaller and feebler than they were; I am perhaps more agile; clapping and hopping I have reduced my bag to six a day.

The Beauties, and the Beasts! Here, in the Zoo, we are besieged by both, and for every form laid up in heaven (of trout, tiger, or hawk-moth) there is a balancing eyesore to excite grins and compassion. The giant ant-eater, at one time, was a monarch of his kind, a character out of Balzac or Grandville; and now—with ants, I suppose, getting scarce—the throne has passed to the Abyssinian wart-hog. He is all hide and bristle, warts and tusks, all disfigurement; sorrowful even, in ugliness. The tribute-loving sea-lion dives and barks across the way; and poor hog replies—with a belch.

The favourites, of course, haven't changed, never change; except for the few that have retired for the duration. That emblematic figure, the lion, looms larger than ever. Entering the Lion House or Mansion—Victorian in its emphasis—we might feel that we were being admitted to England itself. There is an atmosphere of public life, of national success. This impression is strengthened when we halt before one particularly splendid mane and read on the notice below: "Presented to the Prime Minister in 1943"; and, a little farther on, is a lioness with cubs adopted by Mr. and Mrs. Vic Oliver. A Churchill strain, as we go on to saunter about the Gardens, seems inescapable. Why, here is the "whipped jackal" we all remember; the buzzard and the lynx appear to side with the Axis, too. The eagle? H'm, on the whole we can claim this handsome and invincible bird, and just as well, for as an enemy he would be frightening. But the tiger; I don't know where he stands and daren't ask. The evening papers will be waiting at Chalk Farm when at last we push out through the turnstile.

Last memories, that will haunt for a while till the dust and the traffic close over, are of scraps and colours; peacock tails, a Diana monkey stooping to drink, the scarlet eye of the demoiselle crane, the tiger's prowl, flamingoes in a pink dawn. I have seen round a prison, but carried away amazing flashes from a pageant. A late product of evolution, I go back to my own cage, to sit down and write an article.

G. W. Stonier

MUSIC

Anyone who doubts whether there is a real distinction between genuine and false atonal music, could have been convinced by attending Messrs. Boosey and Hawkes' concert on April 26th. This opened with a symphony for strings by Honegger. Written during the first year of the German occupation, this symphony was smuggled out of France and given its first performance in this country on Wednesday evening. I cannot but hope that no serious risk was incurred by the smugglers in rescuing this grumpy and tedious work. In 1922 Honegger appeared the most gifted and promising of the younger French school (he is actually Swiss, of course); but since that time he seems to have become more and more hopelessly involved in the dilemma of Mr. Facing-both-Ways. There is no use going in for atonalism in a big way unless you are prepared to think and imagine consistently in that idiom. Backward glances at classical harmony lead only to a horrid muddle—as in this symphony, which is neither one thing nor the other. Where the harmony is inconsistent, the melody will also fail to convince, and I have seldom heard a tune sound more foolish than the chorale which raised its voice of feeble triumph in the last movement. Rhythmic interest there was none. This glum, self-important rubbish plays into the hands of those who accuse all modern music of ugliness and obscurity.

The next item on the programme—three movements from Alban Berg's *Lyric Suite*, transcribed for string orchestra by the composer—was the real thing. There can be no doubt of the thorough-going nature of this music. It is a classic of its kind, and the noble, melancholy lines of the *andante amoroso* showed clearly that beautiful atonal melody is more than a theoretical possibility. I did not, however, think the transcription a happy idea. This music is essentially conceived for a combination of four solo instruments; the extra body of strings merely obscures the outlines and—in the *allegro misterioso*—deprives the music of its characteristic quality.

After the interval came a new work by a young composer who is worth watching—Humphrey Searle. Unfortunately for myself, I missed the former work of this composer and so had nothing to go on; but this *ostinato* struck me as both imaginative and thoroughly intended. The work consists of a set of variations on a theme which radiates slowly from a centre, and a first hearing left me with the impression that the whole thing was too short. Mr. Searle's material, and his attitude towards it, clearly involve a specious time most inadequately numbered by the actual duration of the music. The khaki in which the composer acknowledged the applause of the audience no doubt accounted for the disappointing brevity of the work.

The concert ended with the piece which had evidently caused the hall to be packed to overflowing (chiefly with quite young people): Benjamin Britten's *Serenade* for tenor, horn and strings. This was, on the whole, the best performance I have yet heard of what I believe to be Britten's most important work to date. Both Peter Pears and Dennis Brain gave performances of incredible virtuosity, and the Boyd Neel String Orchestra responded sensitively to the high demands of the score. It is indeed good news that this exquisite and profound work is to be recorded with the soloists for whom it was written.

Readers are reminded that the Gerald Cooper Chamber Concerts continue, at fortnightly intervals, and that the programmes are both unconventional and well cast; and that the Griller Quartet has been giving a series of excellently chosen concerts of which one, on May 17th, is still to come.

Edward Sackville West

BALANCE SHEET

"The way in which banks and business concerns have adapted themselves to wartime conditions is remarkable. . . . For India 1943 was a year of conflicting experiences; practically universal prosperity on the one hand, and a distressing shortage of foodstuffs on the other."—Chairman's Report, National Bank of India.

When we survey the Indian situation
We must be struck by two conflicting trends,
On the one hand, want, famine and starvation,
And on the other, soaring dividends;
Which wakes reflections of a fruitful kind
In the contemplative financial mind.

On the one hand, a record of prosperity
Unequalled even in the days of peace,
And on the other, symptoms of austerity,
Resulting all too often in decease.
Due, it is generally understood,
To shortage of the minimum of food.

On the one hand, the business curve ascending,
Reflecting boundless credit on us all,
And on the other, lack of power of spending,
Particularly noticed in Bengal,
Where millions showed decreased initiative
Combined with inability to live.

On the one hand, a flourishing condition
Unparalleled in times of total strife,
And on the other, shortage of nutrition,
Resulting in distressing loss of life:
Indeed the record of the past year seems
A picture of quite opposite extremes.

Which seems to show the power of adaptation,
So marked in fields of commerce and of trade,
Was absent in the native population
Which, rather, passive listlessness displayed—
A non-co-operation with the Raj,
Which might appear as almost sabotage.

Indian economy in war conditions
Therefore displays a contrast quite immense,
As we survey these two small marked divisions
And note the conflict in experience;
One half the world, we feel with fresh surprise,
Does not know how the other lives—or dies.

Sagittarius

THE MOVIES

"Fanny by Gaslight," at the Gaumont and the Marble Arch Pavilion
"My Universities," at the Tatler
"Le Roi S'Amuse," at the Academy

I believe I am right in saying that there has been no really good film about Victorian life. Thrillers in plenty have given us the maniacs, the fogs, the toppers and bustles, London squares and music-halls and glimpses of the river; while here and there, in a prologue or an epilogue (Jane Eyre's schooling, for example), a curtain has been lifted on less romantic horrors. But how much has been missed! To take Victorian London, Cruikshank and Doré, Thackeray and Samuel Butler, Gissing and Oscar Wilde provide a variety of inspiration; and farther afield there are Trollope's cathedral towns (more of Trollope in a moment) and Hardy's West Country. The background, in history and imagination, is solid enough; the great Victorians, the hairy Victorians, the hypochondriacal and successful Victorians are waiting. Yet Victorianism on the screen exists only superficially. How unreal it is, this caricature of a great age, can be measured by anyone who has been startled by the pictures of the Russian 'eighties in Gorky's Life, Part III of which is being shown again at the Tatler. (When, by the way, shall we be allowed to see Part II of this masterpiece?) Trollope would offer an easy-going and truthful approach; plots, characters, talk and convention are all there. *Fanny by Gaslight*, from the novel by Mr. Michael Sadleir, is Trollope seen through later and romantic spectacles. The very musical street-song with which the film begins tells us that this will be a story without jarring notes. It works out dramatically, charmingly and—so far as it goes—authentically. The house on the corner of Belgrave Square stands unchanged to-day, though a legation probably inhabits the rooms where a Cabinet Minister, his nanny, his relentless wife and illegitimate daughter played out the drama envisaged by Mr. Sadleir. Illegitimacy was a favourite theme in the age of big families, and the plot travels high and low, from Belgravia to Pimlico, country mansion to town laundry. The Cabinet Minister falls under a train rather than face public scandal; a villainous peer brings brawls and duels; Fanny, deprived of a father, is almost done out of marriage, too; there are glimpses of country houses, stews, the servants' hall, pubs, the Gaiety door, and Paris in the 'nineties. Mr. Asquith, directing, has made the most of local colour; his touch travels delightedly over the black duellists in the early morning, or a bashful rake caught by dancing girls in a "Shades." Seldom, in fact, have I seen a film more agreeable to watch, from start to finish. And this camera skill provides more than a decorative ease, it enhances dramatic effect. I shall remember particularly one sequence with gratitude: the scene in which Fanny's father, confronted by a wife insisting on divorce, is driven to suicide. She has stood, relentlessly, by a dressing-table making her demands, and two of the mirrors reflect her attitude. Then, after the door has closed behind her, and the poor man takes in the full horror of the situation, he also stands gazing in the mirrors; this time there are three reflections, so that the tense face is shown simultaneously from four angles: a brilliant and time-saving moment, for the next shot reveals his death in a newspaper headline. The acting in this very well-made film is consistently good: Phyllis Calvert, James Mason, Stewart Granger and Margaretta Scott especially please. The happy ending takes us, I am sorry to say, into Filmlandia; it wasn't so in the book, I gather, and in general the seamier episodes have been toned down. This seems to me a pity in a film which is charming and might have been exciting too.

At the Academy *Le Roi S'Amuse* revives brilliant performances by Victor Francen, Raimu, Popesco, and others in a comedy of Royalty visiting abroad. The fun about kings and democrats, mistresses and trade treaties, is perfectly sustained for almost two hours.

William Whitebait

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Correspondence

ORGANISATION AND THE LABOUR PARTY

SIR,—It is now clear that the Labour Party Executive will ask Conference this Whitsuntide to reject a Coalition of the Left in favour of an independent bid for power by Labour at the next election. But while the fighting spirit of the faithful is as good as ever, it would be suicidal for the Movement to go frivolously into what will undoubtedly be a very tough encounter.

The Labour Party is ticking over to-day on a declining membership. Individual membership has been almost halved since the war began, and is now less than a quarter of a million. Even this low figure is inflated, for many local parties which affiliate on the minimum of 240 members are, in fact, mere skeleton organisations run by half a dozen enthusiasts. The ward parties are not enrolling the new converts to progressive politics who are now being made in such encouraging numbers. In some cases this is undoubtedly due to the widespread belief that Labour Party politics are dominated by the national trade unions. On the other hand, the unions themselves are at the moment failing to act as recruiting agents for the Labour Party. The two million-odd trade unionists who are the bedrock of the Party's strength are not compensating the constituency organisations for their loss of "white collar" members by providing the necessary workers out of their own ranks.

For many years the National Executive has expressed regret at the failure of trade union branches to take up affiliation to their local parties in addition to national affiliation through their Head Offices. But it is unrealistic to expect the average trade union branch member to feel responsible for local party work as long as his affiliation to the Labour Party is through national channels, and his vote on policy cast by national delegations. The constituency parties' vote in Conference is based on their individual membership only, and however many local union branches affiliate to them, this vote is not increased. They can summon between them only 400,000-odd votes against a total union vote of over 2,200,000. Three-quarters of a million votes are in the hands of the two biggest unions who can thus, of their own strength, swamp the constituency parties' voice. Six big unions cast between them over 50 per cent. of the votes of the whole Conference. Is it surprising that the unionist looks to his national delegations for political expression rather than to his local party?

The great need is to break down this separatism and the only way is to tackle the problem at the point at which it is created: the form in which unions affiliate to the Party and the machinery through which union votes are cast. If the unions were to affiliate half their contracting-in members nationally, as at present, and the other half through the appropriate local Labour parties, as is proposed in some Conference resolutions, their functional representation in the Party would be retained, yet at the same time the local parties would become true microcosms of the all-embracing national organisation. The trade unionist would in no way be disfranchised but in order to influence the larger vote now cast by the local parties as a result of his affiliation through them, he would have to take an intimate interest in their activities. For under the new arrangement the bias in Party Conference would be reversed: the national vote of the unions would be halved and the constituency parties' vote, increased by just over a million, would be in the majority.

Such a change would give a bigger voice in policy to the rank and file trade unionist who is so often at present, as the No Strike Orders prove, out of touch with his Executives. The Labour Party advocates positive democracy, but does it practise it? Few unions claim to consult their rank and file on the Labour Party Conference agenda or to encourage the initiation of resolutions for it by local branches. Minority views inside the unions, running in some cases into the hundred thousands, are denied expression because the unions' votes are cast in undivided national blocks. As a result Labour Party politics are rarely debated in the branches and much political energy, which the Party urgently needs to drive its machinery, is never generated. There is an urgent practical case to be made for any change which would bring the trade unions into closer touch with local party work. It is to the trade union branches that the Party should first look for the active workers that it needs to put its organisation in fighting trim.

The Labour Party has developed slowly, but progressively, from a party representing narrow sectional interests into a body reflecting the needs of the people as a whole, and it is significant that each widening of its basis has deepened rather than tempered its Socialist philosophy. The important step taken in 1918, when individual membership was first introduced and the first Socialist manifesto—*Labour and the Nation*—issued, made it possible for the Party to organise the new progressive thinking stimulated by the war and to win the electoral victories of 1924 and 1929. The war, now reaching its climax has created a new progressive ferment of which the Labour Party is not yet reaping the advantage. It is time to overhaul the machinery again and to bring it more into line with the needs and opportunities of the day.

44 Belsize Park Gardens, N.W.3 BARBARA BETTS

THE POLISH ARMY

SIR,—As a Polish officer ("Aryan"), may I express my gratitude for your article on the Polish minorities entitled "Very Dirty Laundry". The comments of general uneasiness and disgust which have been expressed to me by my British friends, regarding the findings of the Polish courts-martial, inspire me to clarify some further points.

For everyone who knows the proceedings of a Polish court-martial the findings were certainly not surprising. If one would take some interest to study the Polish Military Law one would find the very example of the totalitarian principle of law on which the whole jurisdiction is based. This is quite understandable as the Military Code was introduced in the pre-war days when my country was ruled "so happily" by the military clique.

The ill-treatment of the Polish minorities, whether Jewish or otherwise, is however a partial aspect of the real issue to which the transfer will not bring a solution. The constant threat and "throwing overboard in the Channel" attitude is being expressed to anybody who dares to disagree with the reactionary policy of the military leaders. It is not only a question of minorities, and the suggested creation of a "Jewish Army" is, in my opinion, a further encouragement for any "perverted nationalism" wherever it may be.

The attitude of the British press is inspiring, but rather naïve. Do you really expect that the Polish Government, which in its official paper—*Dziennik Polski*—considered the verdict as "lenient," the alleged ill-treatment as "non-existing" and created by "enemy propaganda" (read Soviet), can give any assurances as to the future? The Polish Government in London has little control over the Army rulers, and it is most unlikely that it would sincerely interfere in these matters, even if some of the Ministers realise that anti-Semitic propaganda is unprofitable at the present time.

As it has been rightly pointed out, this perverted nationalism has flourished in our Army in Britain, and it would be rather hypocritic and dangerous to expect that it will not increase as soon as the Army moves abroad. As there is so little control over the reactionary activity of our commanders, which I consider suicidal for the future of my country, there will be none abroad. It is therefore of the utmost importance that the British people should be well informed as to their actions, which may prove harmful

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[18s]
JONATHAN CAPE

to the democratic principles for which the Allies are fighting this war. PROGRESSIVE

"THE CASE FOR EXAMINATIONS"

SIR,—For those who have read Brereton's persuasively documented, closely reasoned and at the same time "radical" study of examinations it will seem unfortunate that Joad's review got submerged in a heart-to-heart correspondence about certain "free" schools and their achievements. A few parents and school heads can afford to risk leaving the examination question to a child's better judgment for the sake of promoting purity of intellectual motive, but the possession of the School Certificate, in particular, is an essential step towards qualifying, immediately or after further academic or business training, for a great multitude of jobs. For as long as any one can see ahead, most of the parents and therefore of the schools concerned will be forced by sheer economic pressure to regard a well-prepared attempt at the School Certificate as a vital connecting process between school education and the exercise of a profession. The S.C. incidentally replaces a jungle of special qualifying or preliminary examinations, which in turn superseded the much more corrupt method of appointment by jobbery or push.

For most school children work for the School Certificate is the last link with that growing cultivation of experience which we now call culture. For a smaller percentage the further examinations are equally final. It is of very great importance that all these examinations should be as well planned as possible, neither wasteful of examiner energy nor out of touch with the farthest common research of teachers, and positively integrated by personal contacts and vision. This, rather than familiar arguments in favour of school effort directed and co-ordinated by external Boards, is the real subject of Brereton's book, and I for one hope that teachers and parents will read it, as a step towards acclimatising themselves to the needed reforms of the present regime of somewhat autocratic and independent university rulings, and also in the case of teachers towards realising with greater precision of detail that improvement is ultimately dependent on them.

Reading. A. E. F. DICKINSON

COMPASSIONATE LEAVE

SIR,—A good deal is heard nowadays about the difficulties of young mothers in wartime. An aspect of this problem which is particularly difficult is that of the care of the other young children when the mother is to go to hospital to have another baby. In peacetime, in addition to father being at home, it is possible to "call on" aunts and sisters as well as friendly neighbours. Now these are away on war work and fathers are away in the Forces. The Army authorities have recognised the difficulty and have allowed compassionate leave to soldiers for a short period where proper enquiry has shown that the absence of relatives is really causing hardship.

In the light of impending events, it is to be assumed that such compassionate leave may not continue to be possible, and the difficulty in which young mothers will be placed may be more acute and worrying for them than ever. Would it not be possible to meet this by instituting a system of compassionate leave from the factory for women so requesting it, and who are close relatives of mothers finding themselves in this difficulty? After enquiry into the genuineness of the case, compassionate leave (subject, as in the case of Servicemen to the exigencies of their work) could be granted for a definite period to enable the worker to care for the children in the home during the period of the mother's confinement.

If under such a system, Sister Susie or Aunt Jane were available, it would not only be a great relief to the mother, who could leave her children in friendly hands, but it would relieve the pressure on residential nurseries, for which, incidentally, the Minister of Labour is constantly being pressed to find more staff, and to which mothers are obliged to send their children for want of a relative or friend to look after them in the home.

If I am asked who would undertake the necessary home enquiries, I would suggest that on the assumption that most of the mothers in question are Servicemen's wives, perhaps the Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen's Families' Association, who make all the enquiries in connection with applications for compassionate leave for members of the Forces, might be prepared to render this further service to their families if the scheme were agreed to by the Ministry of Labour. ELEANOR NATHAN OF CHURT

O REASON NOT THE NEED!

SIR,—Y. Y. usually provides a delightful gleam of charm and humour in what is often in your stimulating paper a political tornado. In his remarks on my appeal for a rational calendar, he supplies wit but not accuracy. The plan is not mine: I did not regard any links with the past as "beautiful," and I could not work up emotion on such a subject. I am a great admirer of inequality and variety, but not in a calendar. What follows is an example!

Why, why?
Say I
Do you
Eschew
With such contempt
A man's attempt
To put before the public gaze
A scheme to tidy dates and days:
In fact, to aid the people's mind
And make a change in what they find
So inconvenient.

Oh, fie!
Y. Y.
You choose
Your views
Why should not I?
So why decry
In terms so incomplete and sly,
When days and dates are all awry?
An M.P.'s job is but to try
Like you, to do some good, so why
Should we now quarrel?

I've always looked on you as one
To give us streams of thoughtful fun,
But this time I regret to find
You have a most untidy mind:
Hating reform, you are surely
Just like a Sussex "diddiguy."

House of Commons. TUFTON BEAMISH

GEOLOGICAL TIME

SIR,—One would hate to doubt Mr. Stonier's dates, so it must be the result of reading three geological works at once for review in the NEW STATESMAN of April 22. But if it really was the Krakatoa eruption which caused the sunsets that inspired Turner's early work, the force behind it must have been remarkable indeed; enough not only to send the volcanic dust three and a half times round the world, but backwards through Time for about three-quarters of a century.

Cambridge House, R. DAWSON
131–139 Camberwell Road, S.E.5.

[Mr. Stonier writes: "My deviation into geology did indeed lead me astray. Whether I misread the date as 1783, I don't now remember; but the facts are that Krakatoa erupted in 1883, and that the remarkable sunsets following the eruption might be said to have *fulfilled* Turner's visions but not *inspired* them. I should like to make it plain that this blunder was entirely mine, and not due to any of the books under review."—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

How to Spend It. A large number of replies have come for Pluto-Crat, who asked for suggestions for spending £100 a year to promote Socialism. Would Pluto-Crat kindly forward his address, which has been mislaid?—ED., *N.S. & N.*

Ready May 11

Total War and the Human Mind

A PSYCHOLOGIST'S EXPERIENCES IN OCCUPIED HOLLAND

A. M. MEERLOO, M.D.

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EYRE & SPOTTISWOODE

BOOKS IN GENERAL

ANATOLE FRANCE was born on April 16th, 1844. He ripened with the century and died (over-ripe, the critics said) in 1924. His centenary comes too soon, for it has caught his reputation floating trivially in the trough that always follows a wave of fame. We find it hard to face the elders whom we admired when we were young and who dominated our scene, for they contain too much of our discarded life. Reading them again we find them mocking us with our own image, like a parent or a brother who is ourselves yet not ourselves. And yet it is not hard to disentangle himself from Anatole France. Despite his artifice, his epicureanism, his air of ripeness and scepticism, he is at heart an adolescent writer. His world—as he says towards the end of his last autobiographical book, *The Bloom of Life*—is the world of desire and illusion. His way is the primrose path of nostalgia, sensual pessimism and self-love. The famous irony is the artful weapon of the bookish man who never grows up, who tastes life and history. They are a gourmet's dish, sweetened by the senses, salted by horror. He observes but does not experience; and, beginning as a dreamer, a writer of historical *pastiche*, a faun-like comedian of the museums and the libraries, he ends in moral nihilism. One is reminded of his own phrase about Van Dongen's portrait in old age: "It makes me look like a Camembert that is running."

The notes of tenderness and the naive which appear in both the sentimental and the savage writings of Anatole France led many critics to feel that, if he was appalled by human nature, he also pitied it. But now one begins to doubt. One does not pity men until one understands their dignity. As one reads his life and re-reads his books one builds a picture of Anatole France shut up in a day-dream world, protected by all the authority of a superb culture, tortured by self-pity and not by pity for mankind. His reminiscences of childhood and youth, his essays in the archaic improprieties of history, and his two or three realistic novels reveal a man who chooses to exploit the pleasure, the terrors and the final anarchy of a personal solitude. He became a kind of Gibbon who has lost the love of liberty in the love and hatred of himself and who, tactfully withdrawing from the battle of history, contents himself with the footnotes. It is the course of the bookish man, the man who has tippled the illusions of the library and whose irony scarcely conceals the complacency of the non-combatant. One might suppose, after reading his novel about the Terror, *The Gods are Athirst*, that the French Revolution was an idle piece of human sadism caused by boredom or some northern incursion of the sirocco, and that the forces of history are really nothing but the agglomerated aberrations of human character. The complacency of this view is as shocking as the Terror. It is not a cold complacency; it is the complacency of the day-dream and self-love.

To this passive and cunning view of life Anatole France brought the genial resources of his unorganised reading, the power to crystallise it in anecdote and to link the anecdotes together with the subtlety and wit of the French tradition. One is rummaging in a second-hand bookshop—and, of course, he was the son of a famous bookseller—and each volume has its human habit and voice. As a novelist Anatole France was less a creator of characters than a compressor of them. He squeezed them out of books, as wine drips out of the press. His naive priests and his fanatics, his trenchermen and his sluts, his always bedable girls, his politicians gulled by their own corruption are the fantasies of the library, jocosely or morbidly removed from the treadmill of life. There is scathing diagnosis—see his handling of the Dreyfus case in *Penguin Island*—there is art. But a heavy price is paid for this intellectual high-colouring of France's characters: we cannot take them seriously. They have wine instead of blood; sex but not vitality. The Terror in *The Gods are Athirst* does not terrorise except as a theory about the Terror. We are engaged by the sensational notion that hundreds offered themselves voluntarily to the guillotine, that the Moscow confessions were anticipated, that a woman would cling to her lover with a wilder ardour and attain an even more powerful satisfaction, when she knew he had that morning condemned innocent men peremptorily to death. Women offer themselves to murderers with special zeal. And yet, in the end, we put down this novel which was to blast the puritan out of us and to replace him by the mellow and stoical reader of Lucretius—we put it down with the feeling that we have been tricked. Surely, we say, huge scenes have been left out. Surely it is perverse to personify the Revolution in a narrow prig like Gamelin and to treat the Terror as an outburst of self-righteousness or to isolate it as a clinical instance of madness. Is it enough to regard the Terror merely as one of the frenzies of human nature? Was it not inevitable and therefore tragic? Is it not an insult to those cartloads of human beings jolting towards the guillotine, to give them the pathos of marionettes, to treat them as a cat treats a mouse, to use them as a psychiatrist's anecdote? The sadism and pity of Anatole France are certainly powerful and unrelenting in this book; but, in the end, one comes to regard it as a piece of erotica, while its judgment—that after revolutions have done their worst, life eventually goes on exactly as before—is obviously a confusion of ideas.

I see nothing humane in this book. On the contrary, it seems to me a plea for human isolation, and it has paid the price of such pleas; it has missed the sight of human dignity. Irony has made horror trivial. One sees it through a keyhole. Anatole France professed to recover something of the eighteenth century, but the humanity of the eighteenth century was not the fruit of a philosophy of contemplation. Gibbon recorded the crimes and follies of mankind, but his History was imbued with a hatred of tyranny; and Voltaire, that "chaos of clear ideas"—was driven by the same passion. The humanity of the eighteenth century was an active faith, enlarged by the variety, not desiccated by the absurdity of human nature; and men like Gibbon and Voltaire did not suppose themselves to be standing on some magically stationary point in history. A mystic like Blake did not think of the Terror as chiefly an example of the savour of human cruelty.

The purely literary critic would say that the talent of Anatole France was the talent of annotation. He was, like so many of his characters, a collector of *bric-à-brac*, a *bouquiniste* of the quays, a conversationalist. He arranges his material. He does not build with it. The pleasure we get from a book like *At the Sign of the Reine Pédauque* springs from grotesque contrasts. The salacious is followed by the lyrical, the philosophical by the picaresque. The patchwork manuscripts of Anatole France, posted into ledger-like notebooks from diverse rewritings, show the care with which he placed each sentence and each episode. No one could have arranged bibelots on a table more maliciously. But the failure to rise to the fullness of a great theme is curious in a brain and taste so greatly gifted. One is tempted to turn away from literary criticism and to explain the failure, as Mr. Edmund Wilson has done, as the result of the lack of some comprehensive and energising philosophy of life. Bourgeois culture had become static and self-contained. Anatole France has written enough about himself—and very honestly, too—to show that he was essentially a timid and egoistical writer; and one can understand how the first World War must have scattered his learned dreams by showing him History out on the hunt and with purpose in its eye. But a writer cannot have a comprehensive philosophy of life just for the asking. And if there is no comprehensive view about mankind in Anatole France beyond the notion that we are going round in circles, there is a pretty constant view about one subject in his books—that is, the Church. There his scepticism could bite because it had something for his teeth to bite on. The fame and influence of Anatole France with the large public were due, one suspects, to his response to the religious crisis of the late nineteenth century. After all the sneers, the comedies and the satire at the expense of the Church, there remains a nostalgia, like his own nostalgia for his childhood, which was typical of the minds of those caught in this religious conflict. And, especially in England, his sophisticated and Rabelaisian manner, alternating with the pretty manner of the folktale, soothed the struggles of our over-strenuous consciences. For at least a generation no English writer offered the same irreverent delights.

My own taste is divided between the autobiographical books about childhood and the one or two realistic novels. *Le Petit Pierre* and *Pierre Nozière* are studied, but they are graceful and convey the dogged smallness and anxiety of childhood. They evoke, as *The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard* does also, the life of the narrow streets of the Quartier Latin and of the Quais, so that one seems to be treading again the shadows of the plane trees and seeing the severe ripples of the Seine. The quality of meditation is filled with Latin sentiment; the fairy-tale charm is of the period. (That it may be a little fake is part of the charm.) The Bohemianism is harsh and native. It belongs to an entirely French society, unpolluted by the raucous Bohemia of Montparnasse. The tragedy of Anatole France was that he drifted from this fanciful world into the more violent world of religion, political and historical fable. The realism of books like *The Elm Tree on the Mall* or *The Red Lily* has a smaller scope, but its note is truer. One cannot call a book like *The Red Lily* a great novel about jealousy, but in its severe frame it reflects a few things perfectly and with supreme economy. Formal and quite unspeculative, it makes its comment on "mœurs" with a clarity that is worth all the juicy Abbés, the tavern sluts and tedious scholars of the epicurean novels. These are good for a page, or good for a chapter, but they have the tedium of marginalia. They are a connoisseur's collection, a professor's conundrum, a bookseller's whisper. The great foot of Rabelais comes down upon the pretty pickle and leaves it looking flat.

V. S. PRITCHETT

NEW NOVELS

Indigo. By CHRISTINE WESTON. *Collins.* 10s. 6d.
Phil Empresson. By E. F. BOZMAN. *Dent.* 7s. 6d.
Ripe for Shaking. By HUGH MASSINGHAM. *Cresset Press.* 9s. 6d.

If once a reviewer's conscience is touched there seems no limit to the morbid distress which he must endure. My last review here, written some six weeks ago under the shadow of the scalpel, condemned Marquand's new novel with all the colourless venom which physical pain induces. Since then five or six honourable opinions have been offered in the book's defence; I had missed, I was told, the vividness of local colour. After referring again to my review copy, I recognise that the book's incidental good qualities are more impressive than I had thought.

The lesson should, I suppose, be one of greater caution. And yet how one misses, in the discretion of contemporary criticism, the outrageous vituperation and praise of a few years ago! The critic's function is not simply to weigh up merits and faults by an imaginary scale of perfection. He ought to be capable of violent prejudice, abuse, exaltation. Like a circus-master he should be constantly cracking his whip to keep up the tension. In the less anaemic period of fifteen years ago the critics—Eliot, Wyndham Lewis, Leavis—indulged their exorbitant loves and hates without any pangs or recantations. It was a sign of health. But to-day our thinner blood has led us to become the slaves of good taste. More silliness is needed, more braggadoccio. "This is the worst novel to be written in England since *David Copperfield*" or "The three greatest

English poets of all time are, it is now generally admitted, Shakespeare, Milton and Leonard Tucker." After reading *The Ambassadors* and *The Golden Bowl* in quick succession I would like to write that Henry James is just a great dead log lying across the road. It would be a hand grenade, or at least a squib. Silliness matters so much less than absence of passion.

Indigo is the best novel on India since Forster's. Bang! But the explosion is hardly audible, for the claim is far too mild. And in any case an irrepressible conscience forces me to admit that I know nothing of Indian novels. The most I am able to say is that *Indigo* is a very good novel. Why is it good? (Why novels are bad is always so much easier to know.) The qualities are revealing, for they are precisely the qualities which are rarest in contemporary English fiction. First—always first and most indispensable of qualities—Mrs. Weston is honest. One never gets the impression, elsewhere so powerful, that the writer is trying to pull a fast one—that, fundamentally the whole occupation is a racket like any other. She is honest and, in the best sense, painstaking. If half the intolerable vulgarity of current fiction is due to dishonesty, most of the other half is due to laziness. But *Indigo* is infused with a delightful freshness which springs from a mind and imagination working for themselves. *Idées reçues* never intrude, nor, as in many worthy books, have they been all too painfully and gapingly excised. (Circumlocutions are often gravestones above a buried platitude.)

These qualities would be little enough without another, too often forgotten—the quality of courage. The theme is a grand one, and as perilous as all grand themes must be. No Jamesian molehill, but the terrific subject of British India, a country where all the conflicts and passions of normal life seem to be almost unbearably intensified. So far as one can judge, Mrs. Weston has baulked none of the formidable issues, and yet she has certainly kept her head and her dignity. I imagine that the great danger here is of wild partisanship, leading inevitably to wild distortion. But the true novelist is a partisan only of man himself against the savage tyranny of his environment. The French boy, the Indian boy, the English boy and girl grow from childhood to youth before us, creatures of their fantastic background, yet truly human, truly individual in their reactions to it. Of the writer's personal views we learn only that she is on the side of man against his eternal enemy. She neither condemns nor excuses; she attempts to understand and to explain. One character, a neurotic English engineer, is defeated—has taken to drink and to outrageous brutality. But he is shown as a *defeated* man, not as a wicked one. It was this quality, the ability to transcend the conflicts between man and man by a vision of the greater conflict, which made *A Passage to India* so deeply moving.

Of Franco-Indian origin, it is clear that Mrs. Weston's attitude to her country is one of passionate ambivalence. The love is shown in her visual appreciation and in the humanity of the principal characters: the hatred in the irredeemable tragedy of the human situation.

The qualities have accumulated—sincerity, industry, courage, pity and knowledge. The last necessity, but not the least indispensable, is simply the ability to write:

> They swept three abreast over sown fields, recklessly aware that they should not. The earth flew behind them, and with a sudden tremendous clatter two pea fowl rose and clambered into the sky, the cock's tail streaming fire.
>
> . . . infant monkeys whose tender sunlit ears caught their fancy. . . .
>
> Draperies and screens fell behind her, shadows grew like forests in every corner and from their gloom demure figures emerged to greet her, their little narrow hands touching vermilion-starred foreheads.

Mrs. Weston lacks the intellectual vigour of Forster, and the intensity of his creative fire. But, and this can rarely be said, she has written a book which it would be a loss to neglect.

Phil Empresson is a much more dubious affair. I don't mean that one doubts its sincerity, but that the writer's intention remains almost grotesquely obscure. It is a very odd book indeed, but for my part I found it sympathetic and refreshing. Yet a bare statement of the theme suggests anything but refreshment or sympathy. Empresson is a quarrelsome, explosive, neurotic and rather futile product of the slangy business world. His story, told in the first person, is concerned with the provisions of his father's will, his fight for his inheritance, his whisky-soaking and his obscure relations with a rather dispirited wife and child. In a foreword Mr. Bozman warns us (disingenuously?) that his hero is unpleasant, quarrelsome and selfish. But in spite of these qualities, perhaps partly because of them, I found him a likeable, ironic and anarchical hero of our times. His redeeming quality is the savagery with which he struggles against the burden of his drab situation. Also I find him an admirable humorist.

"Maybe I exaggerated. Or, to put it another way, maybe I lied."

Many readers will find it all quite drab and pointless, but for those who can enjoy it, the pleasure, if never of great intensity, is fresh and peculiar.

Mr. Massingham's novel deals, informatively, with rich French and cosmopolitan society in the months immediately before the collapse of France. He is a sympathetic, though somewhat flat-footed observer, erring perhaps on the side of over-indulgence. His gift is for minor characters—a dandy Polish count, a white Russian emigré, a lackadaisical French jemenfoutiste. But the principals are not so happy, and one of them, the noble but selfish idealist, evaporates in the most startling way long before the end of the book.

PHILIP TOYNBEE

G. K. CHESTERTON

Gilbert Keith Chesterton. By MAISIE WARD. *Sheed and Ward.* 21*s.*

It is a good thing that Chesterton's biography has been written by a woman, for Chesterton's men disciples have tended to reflect his unreality without the wit and fancy and flashes of insight which, especially in his earlier years, largely redeemed it. To women, however highly they rated his genius, he was not a roaring swashbuckler at whose name capitalists and cocoa-drinkers turned pale, but an overgrown child endearingly, if at times exasperatingly, helpless. It is in this spirit of mixed tenderness and realism, as of a nurse getting a favourite child ready for a party, that Miss Ward has written her memoir of Chesterton. Here is Chesterton, in his best bib and tucker, no doubt, but not in fancy dress, Chesterton visible and audible for everyone to judge for himself.

One of the most illuminating passages in Miss Ward's memoir is an account given by Mr. Douglas Woodruff of a meeting between Chesterton and Mr. Stanley Baldwin. Mr. Baldwin, it appears, did not welcome Chesterton "as a fellow Englishman sharing immense things like the love of the English country or English letters, but with a cold correctitude from a politician who seemed conscious he was meeting in G. K. a man who week by week sought to bring political life into hatred, ridicule and contempt." One cannot blame Mr. Baldwin for being on his guard with someone who was constantly deploring that there was no real hostility between English political parties, but only a sham fight devised to bamboozle the electorate into the illusion that blows were being exchanged on their behalf. In maintaining the cold correctitude which Mr. Woodruff deprecates, Mr. Baldwin was paying Chesterton the compliment of taking his contempt for the geniality of politicians seriously. What he understandably failed to realise was that for Chesterton there was hardly any connection between the dim figures who drifted to and fro in the external world and the flaming embodiments of good or evil that peopled the world of his imagination. So far as he was aware of other persons Chesterton was kindly, courteous and almost tremblingly anxious not to offend. The atheistic Utopias of H. G. Wells symbolised everything in thought and conduct that repelled him most, yet, as Miss Ward shows, he went to considerable trouble on more than one occasion to soothe Mr. Wells's ruffled feelings, and not long before his death wrote to Mr. Wells expressing in the warmest terms his lifelong admiration for the "towering visions" which, judged by his religious beliefs, were exhalations from the bottomless pit. This, like the cordiality he was prepared to show to Mr. Baldwin, was rather absent-mindedness than insincerity, for it was only when he retreated into the haunted garden of his imagination that he really came to life. Anyone who reads his poetry and fiction undistracted by the comparisons (physically rather than spiritually plausible) so often drawn between him and such solid human beings as Falstaff and Dr. Johnson must be impressed by the decadent quality of his imagination. One moves in the world of a child's nightmares, in an evil oppressive twilight swelling to a horror which only some sudden act of violence can dissipate. It was this internal tension which conditioned his picture of the external world. Whatever his theme he simplified it into a conflict between an evil oppression and a liberating champion. His Dickens is the English embodiment of the French Revolution, a man who "panted upwards on weary wings to reach the heaven of the poor," the flail of the soulless economists who had thrust England into the hell of the factory system. His Browning is a plain man who makes his poems out of the simple things of life, shaming the aesthetes at their dubious diversions in velvet-curtained rooms. His King Alfred is Freewill and Christian Hope wiping the floor with the pagan Guthrum and his determinist Danes. As a young man he was often brilliant and sometimes profound in his defence of transcendental religion against the rationalists. But beliefs common to all the great religions of the world could not satisfy his need for a single champion against the powers of darkness. It was inevitable that he should become a Roman Catholic and write a book which, as Miss Ward puts it, "shows the Church not as one religion among many but as the *only* religion." Inevitable, too, that he should arrange all his other beliefs to conform with this central one, should divide the nations into goats who were outside the Faith and sheep who were within it, and, a few years before England was left as the sole defender of all he valued, should write of it that "this most noble and generous nation which lost its religion in the seventeenth century has lost its morals in the twentieth."

HUGH KINGSMILL

COMEDY

The Craft of Comedy. CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN ATHENE SEYLER AND STEPHEN HAGGARD. *Muller.* 5*s.*

This is an admirable little book with a dangerous title. Dangerous because, as Stephen Haggard, one of the correspondents in this sheaf of theatrical letters, himself says, "I realise to-day, as never before, how much comedy is a matter of practical execution, and how useless it is to theorise about it." With what apprehension one would open a book by Mr. Will Hay on "The Technique of the Gag," or one by Mr. Ronald Squire entitled "How I Throw Lines Away"! These are subjects about which one cannot write. There is a certain famous and brilliant comedian who never goes to see himself on the films in case he finds out "how it is done."

In this book the late Stephen Haggard, with a charming earnestness so characteristic of him, tries hard to force Miss Athene Seyler to argue with him on "The Craft of Comedy", but the experienced, wise, and exquisite Miss Seyler nearly always manages to answer him on "The

rt of Comedy." A subtle distinction, perhaps, ut one worth making. Stephen Haggard makes very effort to analyse processes in the comic ctor's mind which defy analysis. Miss Seyler's marks are always more general, more all-mbracing, of necessity, vaguer. At her most linical, she looks at the problems set for her not much in her capacity of an actress, as in that f a producer. She is concerned with effects, ith what ought to come over to the spectator. e invites her to reveal the nebulous secrets f comic craft. Quite rightly, she evades the sue. She could do nothing else without unching all sorts of hazardous speculations and alf-truths which are liable to have the very orst effect on serious students. One has already en the disastrous effect that Stanislavsky's epic orks have had on young artists who cannot elieve that the master ever gave a bad perform-nce, forgot his lines, or made a mistake. It is he most embarrassing thing in the world to atch would-be comic performances based on heory rather than on comic instinct, eternal, and nchanged by time. Shakespearian clowns who alk very quickly in high, airy, singing tones in rder to cover up the lack of humour in the lines, t the same time trying to convey the impression hat what they are chanting is immortal. The ame applies to modern efforts to recreate the *Commedia dell'Arte*. Harlequin and Columbine ave not worn well. The Captain and the Doctor ave developed, and are still going strong in many farces and comedies, of course without the uthor's knowledge. They were just rich comic haracters, and based upon deep-rooted popular ypes. It is these characters, Harlequin, Columbine, Feste, that lend themselves to all he hot-making practices due to an overdose of intellectual reflection on "The Craft of Comedy." Stanislavsky does not help by making impressionable artists take months over things hat can be achieved in weeks. What it boils down to is that too much has been written and said on this mysterious subject. Owing to Miss Seyler's wisdom and Mr. Haggard's modesty, there are, however, no pitfalls in this book. This means, simply, that it is not very deep, which is a virtue, and it covers a great deal of ground, which is a virtue, too. It is a diverting little book which can be read with interest by layman and actor alike. Here, in this book, is final proof of what the theatre has lost in Stephen Haggard, and what it gains in Athene Seyler.

PETER USTINOV

THE POLITICS OF DISASTER

The Mirror of the Past. By K. ZILLIACUS. *Gollancz. 7s. 6d.*

How soon is one war forgotten once its successor has begun! Growing up into politics at the time of the Popular Front, I can remember the increasing disillusion with which I read book after book exposing the sordid background of the war of 1914. Disillusion? And apprehension too. For from the socialist and communist writers—among them Mr. Zilliacus—came a stream of other books, full of biting words like imperialism, the class-struggle and the proletariat, which spoke of a new and more terrible struggle. In his new book, which is an analysis of the part played by imperialism and secret diplomacy in the causes and the conduct of the last war, Mr. Zilliacus adds still further to our knowledge of the methods and motives of economic royalists and capitalist politicians.

It is clear that there is an analogy between those years of political disaster and our own time. For in Britain the same social system remains and the forces which dominated the last war still possess considerable influence. For them, victory over German Fascism is but another chapter in the struggle for imperialist supremacy. If this war is to end in their defeat as well as the collapse of the enemy, we must learn the lesson of the past, of the international capitalist anarchy which produced the last war. We must know how it bedevilled the peace, not through malice but through the inevitable quest for power, and why, in twenty years, it again plunged the world into catastrophe. Life is too short to forget so quickly.

Still, it would be unfortunate if Mr. Zilliacus's indictment persuaded us that this war is merely a mechanical repetition of 1914-18, though on an even vaster scale. Vital differences exist; the most important, as he remarks, is the reversal of the role of the Right and Left. In the last war it was the Left which sought a negotiated peace, and the Right which cried for victory, final and uncompromising. To-day, it is the Left which has the most urgent motives for defeating Hitler.

By skilful quotation from the speeches and writings of those who led the Allied nations to their pyrrhic victory, Mr. Zilliacus makes them tell the harrowing yet fascinating story. It begins in the gay 'nineties: the Victorian era is passing in a blaze of jingoistic glory and self-satisfaction. Yet the morality of international "law" is the morality of the jungle. In foreign policy, one must eat or be eaten. Power politics must be played according to inescapable rules. One sought for power and wealth abroad; at home there was neglect of and contempt for the masses. Liberal outvied Tory in secret diplomacy. "National honour" and "vital interests" were decent phrases to cover the obscenity of the economic greed and jealousy that characterised the rivalry between nations. From the Balkans to Morocco; from Fashoda to the final blunder in 1914, Europe staggered towards war because nobody was able to withdraw from the vicious circle of prestige, obligation and the arms-race. Mr. Zilliacus has drawn the terrible picture with such care that it still makes uncomfortable reading.

As the war progressed, a new factor and a new threat appeared. Though both the masses and socialism had been there all the time, Lenin was to show both the Central Powers and the Allies that the war could be more easily lost—lost for privilege—at the rear than in the trenches. They were not slow to understand how much justification there was for the fear that Sir Edward Grey had expressed to the Austrian Ambassador:

> Universal war, with all its horrible and revolting consequences . . . was the greatest step towards Socialism that could possibly have been made. . . . We should have Labour Governments in every country after this.

From 1917, as the spectre of Bolshevism began to haunt the warring powers, both sides had to meet the challenge—internationally and internally.

Mr. Zilliacus has made a detailed analysis of the impact of the Soviet Revolution upon Western diplomacy, and shows how Germany and her enemies made common cause against the Red Republic which represented the negation of all for which both sides were fighting. Sir Henry Wilson wrote in his diary: "The war against the Boche is turning into a war against the Bolshie."

A sidelight on our intervention in Siberia that is new to me, is Mr. Churchill's telegram—he was then War Minister—to General Knox, British liaison officer with the White Army:

> Instructing him to tell Admiral Kolchak that the Prime Minister, who is all-powerful, is a convinced democrat, and particularly devoted to advanced views on the land question. . . . Admiral Kolchak should issue "a broad and stirring appeal" promising the land to the peasants and a Constituent Assembly, in order to strengthen his hands

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SHEED & WARD

in urging the Prime Minister . . . to recognise Kolchak's Government. . . .

Admiral Kolchak, in the unkind words of the *Daily Herald*, refused "to make a noise like a democrat."

Not least of the virtues of this book is the skill with which Mr. Zilliacus traces the interaction of the various influences which shaped Allied policy. Britain received Wilson's Fourteen Points with an ill-grace; the French greeted them with candid cynicism. "God was satisfied with Ten," said Clemenceau with typical incisiveness. It was only after Wilson had threatened to expose in an address to Congress, that the Allies were reluctant to adopt even a nominally liberal declaration of peace-aims, that they consented. They had no intention of keeping their word either to Wilson or anyone else. Wilson's idealism they used to persuade the liberals and the workers that victory would produce a generous peace.

So the war ended and the miserable attempt to cripple Germany and yet keep her gates closed against the Bolshevik barbarian, began. Through the life of the League was to run the same conflict: the solidarity of the West against the Revolution—or surrender to the inevitable conflict of imperialisms? The problem was, of course, insoluble. And from the floundering attempts to answer it grew the Second War. Mr. Zilliacus, who was for nineteen years an official of the League, is especially qualified to deal with this.

The Mirror of the Past is a book to read and remember. It would have been even better if Mr. Zilliacus had shown more clearly the limits of his intended analogy between the First and the Second Wars. Or perhaps he is writing a sequel to suggest how we may avoid the Third.

NORMAN MACKENZIE

INSTRUCTION AND DIVERSIONS

New Writing and Daylight, Winter 1943-44. *The Hogarth Press.* 8s. 6d.

Horizon. APRIL. VOL. IX, NO. 52. 1s. 6d.

The editors of *Horizon* and *New Writing* have always welcomed foreign authors and articles on the literature and art of other countries. The death of the young Greek critic, Capetanakis, is mourned by Mr. Connolly, and a study of one of his last articles, Dostoevsky, is published by Mr. Lehmann, who also includes an interesting study of the influence of Greece on Russian art by Derek Hill and poems and prose by Czech and Brazilian writers. Yet, curiously enough, this month one is impressed by the specifically English quality of the best creative work. In *New Writing* by far the most outstanding poem is Miss Edith Sitwell's *Invocation*. This moving and melodious poem is written by an Englishwoman, one exclaims: the images are drawn from our countryside; some of the stanzas echo the chords in the potent English music of the Authorised Version and the Book of Common Prayer. The ear detects this English tradition again in the younger poet, F. T. Prince, whose quiet, communicative poems remind one by their pleasant conceits and directness in speech of the poetry of Marvell and Lovelace.

Moreover, the best critical articles are concerned with such problems as how far English art can assimilate foreign influences. Mr. Keith Vaughan in an analysis of those characteristics which are particularly English in our painting concludes: "We learn much from France, but our roots are not there, and I would plead that we become not over-fascinated with her genius to the neglect of fertile ground nearer home." Mr. Lawrence Gowing, also examining the relation between French and English painters, reaches a less direct conclusion. He writes like an artist in evocative, suggestive and rhythmical sentences—not in a hideous garret, two wooden chairs and a table, style. He wishes to discern how deep into the artist's consciousness the influence of other painters penetrates: the artist, intuitive and inarticulate, paints the only way he can, and it is only in his waking, rationalising moments, freed from the process of creating, that he is struck by the bewildering impact of French painting. The analysis of how far one artist can influence another is developed further by Stephen Spender in the rough-hewn prose of his high-minded and serious article on Lorca's poetry. One of his most fertile suggestions is that if a poet is to be influenced by more than the mannerisms of another, he must understand not only the processes of his master's mind, but also the nature of the experiences which have impelled his poetry. Experience is summed up in choice of image. There is in fact much to be said for an examination of English artistic character.

We should no doubt criticise ourselves in the light of the achievements of other countries. And not only European countries. Let us turn to the most stimulating article in *Horizon*, by Charles Fletcher-Cooke, on America. Mr. Fletcher-Cooke writes not as an intellectual or artist, but as an intelligent member of the clerisy, and his conclusions make disturbing reading for planners and intellectuals. He agrees that the clerisy, which now gathers the best brains and energies of this country, is mighty civilised; but it is dominated (and in its turn dominates England) by the devitalising creed of Good Taste and the dull, tired influence of the Elderly, the masters of the critical faculty, who know too much and feel too little. Like Soviet Russia, America admires Material Achievement, glories exuberantly in staggering feats of production. "We in England still bow down before the purely critical mind. We are in danger of producing more and more first-class judges with less and less to judge." Has the crusade against the Philistine been carried too far? Are we not hypersensitive? Do we not over-indulge our critical faculties and thus crush experiment and vulgar endeavour? Unless the English regain their admiration for achievement, our schemes for social achievement will become worthless and our artistic vitality will perish.

Lastly, I would commend Philip Toynbee's article on the Decline and Future of the English Novel in *New Writing*, the best piece of literary criticism in either periodical. "The issues of the modern world—issues of social good and social evil, huge issues of life and death, truth and falsehood—require a novelist in the grand manner. We do not possess one." With this view I entirely agree. Is the new generation of writers too timid? Are they terrified of violating Good Taste? For the cult of Good Taste was in a sense the reaction against the grand manner. Mr. Toynbee believes that they must set themselves new problems of technique which they are determined to solve. That, I think, is true only up to a point—a return to the grand style implies relearning past technique. It would be unfair to conclude from the creative fiction in *New Writing* that there is little hope of such a writer materialising as Mr. Toynbee envisages: a sketch by definition excludes the grand manner. And I am always staggered by the technical ability, the supreme ease with which this sensitive *reportage* is constructed. Mr. Denton Welch is particularly gifted. In two of his short stories, one in each periodical, he displays remarkable talents in evoking the constricted emotions of the adolescent. But, as Mr. Toynbee suggests, unless personal recollections can be mixed with a more powerful fuel, modern prose will light not the beacon but the pyre of the English novel.

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Week-end Competitions

No. 744

by Timothy Trout

At one time no revue was complete without some ...ted versions of current plays. Competitors are ...ed to submit similar parodies (limit, 200 words) ... plays, not necessarily new, running in London or ... provinces. Entries should be received by the ...st post of Monday, May 15th.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 741

...t by Thomas Smallbones

Competitors are invited to celebrate the arrival of spring in 16 lines of verse or 200 words of prose in the manner of any one of the following :—Ruskin, Kipling, Marvell, Walt Whitman, Lord Chesterfield, D. H. Lawrence, Hemingway, Karl Marx.

...eport by Thomas Smallbones

Kipling and Whitman were the favourite choices, ...d Kipling offered a variety of styles. Muriel Grant ...d Stanley J. Sharpless sent in the best Tommy ...kins variety, both excellent. Ronald Mason ...ve an extract from a story full of the technicalities ...ipling loved to combine with biblicisms and a good ...em, a tailpiece to a story. W. E. B. Henderson, W. F. Hurford and Allan Laing also came into the ...al selection. Whitman provided some fine bombast ...ith the poet's ego well in the centre. Raymond ...urray made a brilliant attack which, I felt, petered ...t: Dick Dudgeon, a fine, accumulated, gristly, ...cupational catalogue, and I liked M. B.'s nostalgia ...r spring in old bones, and Mary Mundlow's quiet ...astiche. Lawrence was easier to catch in matter than ... manner. Plenty of "maleness" and obstetrical ...etaphors, but his rhythms eluded most. Leslie ...ohnson's animal poems came near and C. A. Russell ...eally caught the beat except for her 3rd verse. ...antony Goodsten was warm. The Marxists were ...enerally too heavy and pompous allowing for no ...umanity behind the beard. Pinkflower with a good ...etter to Engels, and A. M. M. reached the final ...ifting. Many attempted Marvell, but I missed from ...ll any extravagance of conceit. Mrs. Sewell was ...legant and exact in diction; Joyce Johnson incor...orated the war gracefully. F. C. C. was elaborate ...nd enamelled. C. L. M. F. provided the conceits ...ut missed the eloquence. Ruskin and Chesterfield ...must be written off. No one except Willy Tadpole, ...erhaps, approached the former. H. V. J. Burton, ...with a graceful letter from Chesterfield, was left in the ...lieve at the finish. Two Hemingways, Frank Spooner ...nd especially Derek Barnard's competed. I was left finally with the Hemingway by Derek Barnard which, to my regret, I had to leave aside as unprintable. Dick Dudgeon I recommend for a 3rd prize of half a guinea, Stanley J. Sharpless for a 2nd prize of a guinea and a half, leaving a 1st prize of 2 guineas for Towanbucket's brilliant egocentric Whitman.

I, Walt Whitman, *moi qui vous parle*, am the four seasons : spring, summer, autumn, winter, '
But most of all am I spring :
My being is a-quiver with spring.
When the first lawn mower squeaks, I squeak. If I forget to oil it, I must myself be oiled ;
I am the cut grass that lies about the lawn ;
The lawn, too, I am, so that I lie about myself ;
The wind breathes me, and I breathe forth wind ;
Each and every raindrop is a small, damp Walt from the discharging nebulosities of the Whitman firmament.
First, last and all the time, I am the great sap ever ascending to new heights of unbelievable greenness ;
My head swells with the heads of crocuses, cauliflowers, cabbages, cuckoos, cross-bred mongrels and asparagus ;
I am the spring rash on the face of adolescence ;
I burst into boils and buds, songs, poems and cold sweats,
And still the sap is great in me.
I am the early morning and the dew of the early morning ;
I am both the cold that catches me and the handkerchief ;
Disgust seizes me : I am, until further notice, the sound of trumpets blowing in the nose of spring.

TOWANBUCKET

We was moochin' around near the barracks, one evenin' after tea,
Browned orf with the gloom of hades, Bill Bugginton and me,
When suddenly that son of a Sten stopped dead in his tracks in the lane ;
" Damme," he said, " if the bloody leaves ain't on the trees again."
And there we stood a-marvellin' 'ow spring 'ad done 'er stuff,
The bloomin' annual miracle of callin' winter's bluff ;
The little buds was burstin' and the 'edgerows turnin' green,
And the air was sort of balmy, and the sky was rain-washed clean.
You can prate of yer Forces Programme and yer cracked-up Ensa shows,
But give me a lane and a land-girl, and a spot where nobody goes,
A man's man got to swig 'is pint and enjoy 'is bit of smut,
But if 'e don't thrill to an English spring 'e's the dopiest kind of a mutt.
For it's in the new sap risin' and the sweet birds twitterin' round
That you touch the 'eart of England. And the 'eart of England's sound
So long as one British bastard, 'mid April sun and rain,
Gets a kick out of seein' the bloody leaves upon the trees again.

STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

You war worker in darkness and semi-darkness and in artificial light worse than darkness,
You pallid-faced girl fitting shells, acting mechanically, thinking mechanically, and drugg'd with blaring jazz,
You anode man and you galvaniser, chocking in acid fumes by the side of a steaming vat,
You coal getter, streaked with sweat, crawling where damp drips from the unsympathetic darkness,
You girl cutting fabric for parachutes, biting your nails because the daylight cannot enter through the blacken'd windows.
You clerk, rejected by the medica. board, tyranniz'd by office clothes and making weary journeys to dusty files,
You dope marker and you dough mixer feeling the enervating odour of solvents steal through your nostrils,
You instrument maker working where the ventilation is poor,
Sent almost hysterical by the incessant hiss of escaping steam,
You tapper, teamer, bally, clinkerer, ingot stripper, boxman, chasing man, and cupola man,
You tension end lad, tub loader, engine boy, and tip end boy,
You pickler, rammer, scruffman, shearer, swarfer and linisher,
All you who have become nerve-fretted during winter's long nightmare,
All you who are fatigued, who are selling Life for overtime, envying lives lost in quick, hot blood,
All you who are longing for things which I could describe for you (longing but not daring to express),
All you who long for ligh. and evenings of light for tandem-accessible landscapes and foot-accessible landscapes,
Come with me and salute with me my goddess, spring.

DICK DUDGEON

Personal

W.E.A., Sevenoaks area. All interested in formation of programme W.E.A. classes (Current Affairs, Lit., Psychol., Music, etc.) round Sevenoaks Town attend branch meeting 7.30 p.m., May 9th, Lime Tree Studio, Sevenoaks, or write Howard Fox, 24 Pyecombe Cor., N.12.

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